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A White Liberal Trapped by His Prejudices — DAN JACOBSON
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Cedars of Lebanon
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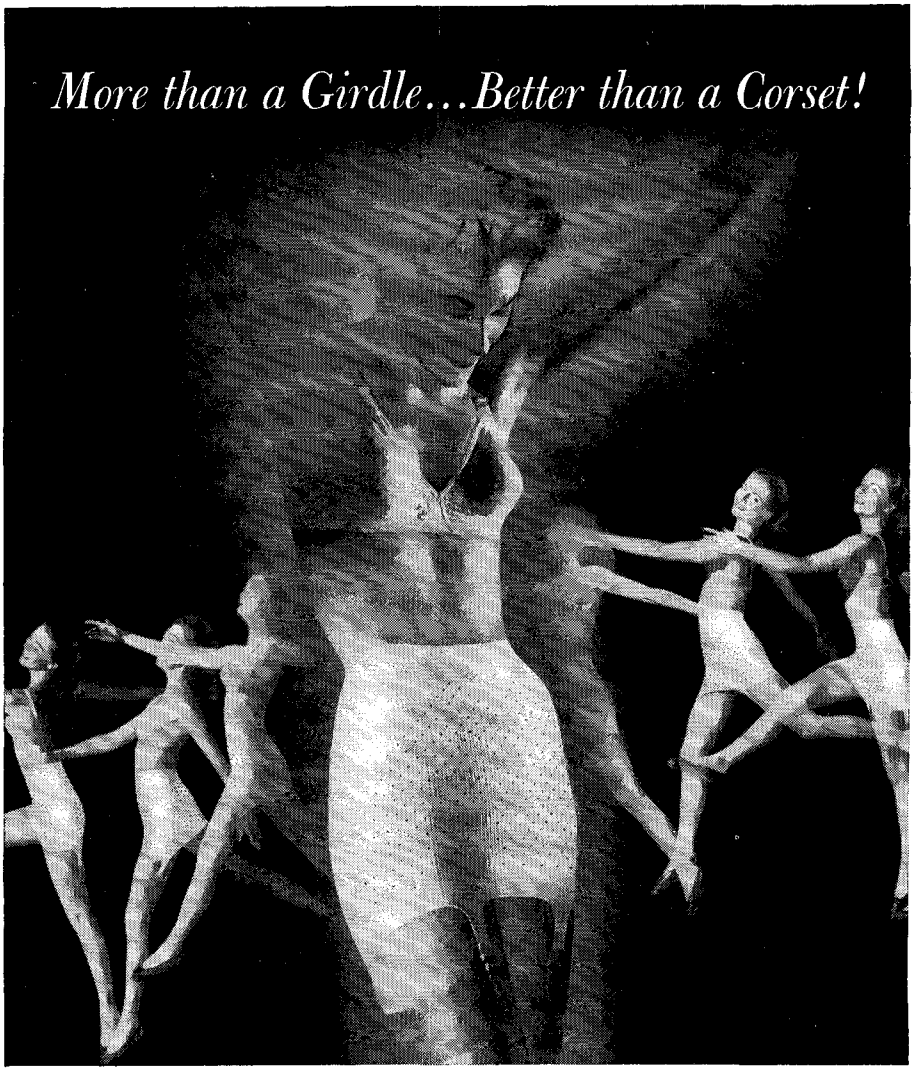

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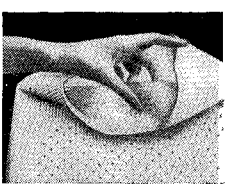

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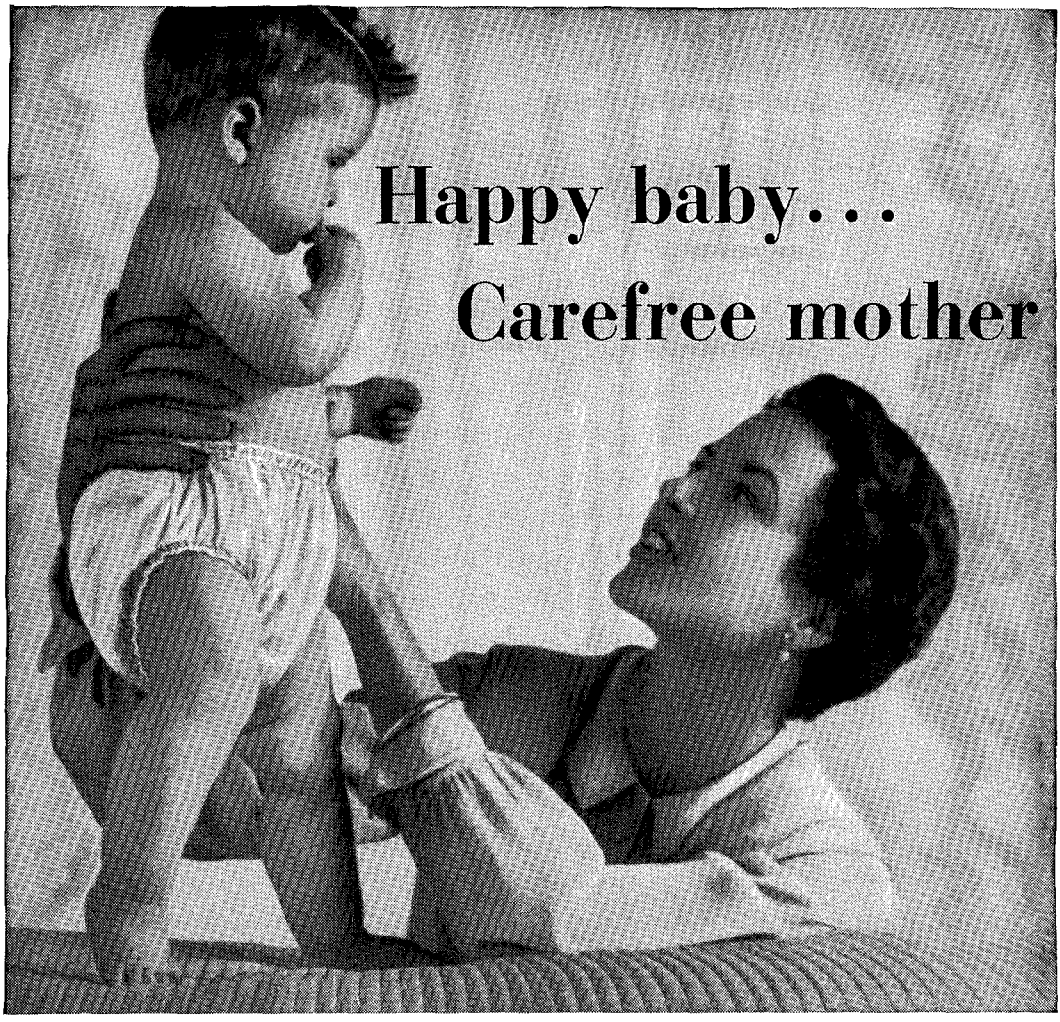

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Current Opinion and Immigration Restriction *Arthur Mann*

In the early 1920's, advanced and liberal opinion in America, scholarly and popular, was overwhelmingly in favor of restricting immigration; today, a strong body of opinion demands the liberalization of immigration policy. The author, a teacher of history at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, considers whether the new current of opinion is strong enough to amend the McCarran Act.

Literature and the "Spiritual Crisis" *Norman Podhoretz*

An examination of that genre of criticism which seeks to relate literature to the moral and religious problems of the modern world, seeing literature as the "handmaiden" of religion – and sometimes, Mr. Podhoretz suspects, seeing religion as merely a means to the production of literature.

Communist Anti-Semitism: East Germany *Hilde Walter*

From the Berlin observation post, Miss Walter reports on the Communist persecution of Jews in East Germany, discusses the repercussions in the Western Zone, and examines whatever evidence is available as to whether or not the reversal on the "doctors' plot" in Moscow has been followed by any similar reversal on the outer edge of the Soviet sphere.

Between Two Worlds *Richard Goldhurst*

Another discussion of the problems faced by the child of a mixed marriage, this time from the point of view of the "victim" himself. Mr. Goldhurst, son of an Irish Catholic mother and a second-generation Jewish father, contributes a very human document, and reminds us that his experience is commoner in America than we tend to think.

McCaffrey's *Donald Paneth*

The natural history of a New York bar, where some of the highly varied denizens of the metropolis gather to find refreshment, company, and sometimes an argument, mostly friendly.

Were the Sephardim Really Aristocrats? *Cecil Roth*

Everyone knows that the Sephardic ("Spanish-Portuguese") Jews, like aristocracies the world over, lived to see their blue-ribbon status in the community leveled down to the common Ashkenazic (Central-East European) herd. Comes now the unkindest cut of all – the eminent historian Cecil Roth documents his strong suspicion that Sephardic nobility was in fact never much more than a myth.

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COMMENTARY

THE LIBERALS' POLITICAL ROAD BACK

The Days of Reform From Above Are Over

ROBERT BENDINER

SPECULATION about the political future of American liberalism in the next few years realistically begins, if it does not end, with the outlook for the Democratic party. Any suggestion that the two are synonymous will be promptly and rightly repudiated by every professional liberal, every Tammany precinct captain, and every senatorial heir of Jefferson Davis, but, for all that, the prospects of both political forces are, at the very least, interdependent. On the one hand, either the party will continue in the imaginative tradition of Roosevelt, Truman, and Stevenson, colored and motivated by the liberal impulse, or it will relapse into political sterility. On the other hand, American liberals have little choice, at least on the level of national politics, but to function as effectively as they can through the Democratic party.

For this mutual dependence, however impermanent it may be—and I am inclined to think it will be of long duration—the reasons are hardly obscure. Consider first the plight of the liberals. Unorthodox opinion in the United States—from Keynesian economics to socialism, from preoccupation with the Bill of Rights to municipal reform—has never been organizationally weaker than today. Reduced to a handful are the swarm of leagues, committees, associations, and congresses that clogged the mail in the 1920's and 1930's with their glittering letterheads, by no means all or even most of them "popular fronts." Gone is the Progressive party of the La Follettes. The Farmer-Labor party and the Non-Partisan League have long since lost themselves in the fold of the major parties. Wallace's Progressives and the American Labor party, both wrecked by Communists, are hollow shells, untouchable for any but the blindest fellow-travelers. And the Socialist party, which once gave Debs close to a million votes, gave its nominee all of 20,000 in 1952 and will not again appear on the ballot. For liberals who want independent political action the only going concern of consequence is Americans for Demo-

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WHAT are the prospects of liberalism in the present era and under the present administration? What are the chances for a remobilization of the forces of social reform, which most observers agree are at the moment at low ebb? ROBERT BENDINER reports here on the state of mind of the liberals, and on program and strategy that he finds crystallizing in Washington, New York, and other centers of reformist politics; he writes as one who believes that the fate and achievements of liberalism have been perforce—and will in all likelihood remain—identified with the Democratic party. Mr. Bendiner is a free-lance writer, former associate editor of the *Nation*. His article "Just How Bad Is Congress?" appeared in our February 1952 issue.

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cratic Action, and it is no secret that where that organization has been most effective—in Minnesota, in Connecticut, in Philadelphia—it has functioned close to, or wholly within, the Democratic party.

THE reasons for this organizational poverty on the left are not hard to discover. Twenty years of New Deal-Fair Deal government have sucked out much of the good these independent groups had to offer and have made that good into law. If the "Big Change" in American life since 1900 has not been quite as overwhelming and conclusive as Frederick Lewis Allen believes, it has nevertheless been large enough to take the steam out of reform, and the drive out of reformers. The yawning gulf between extremes of income has been significantly narrowed, and what is more important, the process of narrowing it still further, through powerful trade unions, the income tax, and other countervailing forces, has been recognized as a normal pattern for the nation. Moreover, not only did government buy many of the reformers' most appealing wares —public power, wage-hour laws, woman suffrage, social security, and so forth—but for twenty years it drained reform groups of their prime movers and personalities, absorbing them into the agencies that drew up and administered their reforms.

What government left intact in the way of these "ginger" groups, the Communists frequently infiltrated, corrupted, and ultimately destroyed. Increasingly, liberals who were unattracted, disenchanted, or altogether repelled by the Communists have come to lean on the party that, in spite of its Byrds, McCarrans, and O'Dwyers, promoted those social gains that have been made since the depression. And now, with that party in defeat, the liberals have only the choice of sticking with it and contributing to its regeneration, or of trying to set up independent groups at a moment when the cold war gravely inhibits new political organization and renders all novelty suspect.

At least some mention should be made of a theoretical third possibility, that of working within the Republican party. "Theoretical," however, is exactly the word, since that extremely small band of Republicans who have been identified with liberalism in any form have had not so much as a nod of encouragement from Mr. Eisenhower, before the inauguration or since. The heavy weighting of presidential appointments on the side of big industry; the bland acceptance of the offshore oil grab, logically regarded as a forerunner to widespread pilfering of the public domain; the lackadaisical quality of the administration, far more reminiscent of Calvin Coolidge than of Theodore Roosevelt—all have served to choke off the most naive hope that under Eisenhower the GOP would encourage a resurgence of the liberal spirit.

As for the reverse of the coin, the Democrats' dependence on liberalism, their party has historically achieved and retained power—war situations aside—when it had a progressive program to offer: a New Freedom, a New Deal, a Fair Deal. It loses when it offers only to hold the line, when it is content to defend its past achievement, and goes on chanting stale slogans. In such cases the Republicans have only to espouse the gains they themselves stubbornly fought while in the making. (Theodore Roosevelt was the exception who promised more than that, and even though he did not mean half of what he said, he nearly wrecked the Republican party.)

THUS there is good reason to believe that the Republicans would have won last November even if they had not had a national hero heading their ticket, and even if discontent over the stalemate in Korea had not played into their hands. For the plain truth is that since shortly after Pearl Harbor, when Roosevelt announced somewhat coyly that "Dr. New Deal" had been supplanted by "Dr. Win-the-War," the Democrats have been living on borrowed time. War saved them in 1944, and in 1948 they would almost surely have gone down if Harry Truman had not been able to cite the "no-good Republican Eightieth Congress" as evidence that the GOP was out to

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unravel sixteen years of good works. In 1952 Eisenhower seemed like a safe bet at least to hold on to the New Deal reforms, if not to add to them, and the Democrats themselves were almost wholly on the defensive.

What was worse, they were defending what no longer seemed to need defense. It was challenging to speak out for the bargaining rights of organized labor back in 1936. But it had become a mere gesture by 1952, when those rights were so firmly established that only Westbrook Pegler and his imitators still grumbled at them. In the same way, a federal social security program was hot campaign fare when the Liberty League manned the ramparts for Alf Landon sixteen years ago: but only a feeble slogan last November, when General Eisenhower declared that the social advances of the past two decades were no longer a political issue.

Given the task they had set themselves, and the country's always limited capacity for reform, the New Dealers had perhaps done their work too well for their own political good. Without arguing at this point how much their success owed to war and to the postwar defense program, the fact remains that by 1952 an extremely high percentage of young trade unionists had never known a day's unemployment. Americans had no reason to fear for the safety of their bank deposits. And farmers, however irascible they might be on the subject of federal handouts to others, took government protection of the price structure of their own products for granted. I was told by one liberal Senator that farmers resented his telling their prosperous sons and daughters, during the campaign, of the days when their parents had to be tided over by the WPA. These rugged beneficiaries of the New Deal were a little ashamed of having reached for the helping hand of government, and reminders made them uncomfortable, just as the bankers had long since buried the shameful memory of having once had their skins saved by long-haired professors. If it was not quite true, as one of President Truman's aides put it, that "we ran out of poor people," it was certainly true that the supply had dwindled appreciably.

Adlai Stevenson had the good sense to see that it was no longer pertinent to run against Herbert Hoover, and he did manage to discard the weary clichés of Democratic campaigning. But, however refreshing his language, two factors kept him clutched in the tired hand of the past. First, his party felt strongly the need to defend its record. Stevenson had to serve, against his own judgment, in the role described by one of his supporters as "defense counsel of an aging administration." More basic, no one, not even Stevenson, had worked out a fresh and arresting program on which a rousing campaign might have been waged.

To make these points, especially the second, is to explain rather than to criticize. For the probability is that no blueprint pulled out of a hat would have rallied the electorate to the Democratic party. Voters, least of all the pragmatic voters of the United States, do not react to blueprints for the future; they react to programs that seem to them to answer their most pressing immediate needs. Their prime need—and I think this will hardly be gainsaid—was, and is, for some sense of security against the menace of atomic war. They want, above all, the assurance of safety—in peace, if that can be had, or in national strength if it cannot. On this score it is hardly to be wondered that they put their trust in a war hero of a peaceable disposition rather than in a comparatively unknown governor, however undeniable his charm, his ability, and his eloquence. Weighed next to this, it is unlikely that questions of domestic economy counted heavily, if at all.

Must the Democrats and the liberals, then, wait for the return of international harmony or another depression—or perhaps both—before they can hope to return to power? Fortunately for them politics is never that static. Indeed an enforced period on the outside, free of the deadly pressures of responsibility, could be exactly what is needed for Democratic rejuvenation, for

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national recovery from the sheer weariness with reform, and for the opportunity to shape fresh and emerging issues into a significant program. But none of this can be capitalized upon automatically.

What leadership there is in the Democratic party today is in the Senate, and it is almost purely tactical in purpose. To say this is not to ignore the place of Adlai Stevenson but merely to recognize that his leadership, at least for the time, is more symbolic than real. If the party had to pick its next presidential nominee tomorrow, there is little doubt that Stevenson would be the choice, in spite of pointed opposition from conservative Southerners, the continuing ambition of Senator Kefauver, and what are considered the rumblings of emergent ambition on the part of Senator Symington. But a potential Stevenson renomination in 1956 does not imply that he can, or is even trying to, give direction to the party in 1953. Senator Russell of Georgia was not far from the truth when he called Stevenson "titular" head of the party, and defined the adjective as implying "title without authority."

While the right-wing Southerners openly look to Russell and Byrd of Virginia for guidance, as they have for the past ten years, and while the parliamentary reins of the party are formally in the hands of the minority leader in Congress, the only organized planning being done for the Democrats is by a caucus of twenty-three more or less liberal Senators who meet every other week to discuss issues, listen to experts, and plan floor strategy. Headed by Lister Hill of Alabama, its most effective parliamentarian, this unique group is, with some success, trying to fill the role that for twenty years had been held by Democratic presidents. Amounting to half their party's strength in the Senate, it includes, besides Hill, Southerners Sparkman, Fulbright, Gore, Kefauver, and Monroney; Middle Westerners Douglas, Humphrey, Gillette, Symington, and Hennings; Westerners Mansfield, Anderson, Jackson, Hunt, Murray, and Magnuson; and Easterners Lehman, Kennedy, Pastore, Green, Kilgore, and Neely.

It is this caucus that is working out the immediate planning, if not the long-range program, of Democratic liberalism. By and large the planning is such as would suit an enlightened opposition on the alert for tides that might again carry it into power. Issues are selected with an eye to effectiveness and their possibilities for political capital. Remembering Truman's 1948 campaign, the caucus is determined to make a striking record of legislative effort and to show up, by contrast, what they confidently expect will be the negative record of the Republicans. The emphasis, therefore, is always on the positive. It is not enough, for example, to oppose the surrender to the individual states of offshore oil; they must also urge the distribution of income from that oil to the forty-eight states for support of public schools. They are not merely against curtailing public power—some Republicans even talk of turning TVA over to private interests—but plan to sponsor new projects on the TVA model. They are not merely opposed to tax cuts that imperil the efficiency of government and of defense, but seek greater revenue through more equitable taxation.

THE exception to this rule of pressing a positive program, and it is a major exception, occurs in the field of foreign policy. Here the Democrats as a whole are peculiarly negative. Actually their attitude stems from the fact that the Republicans, having offered no program that differs seriously from that of their predecessors, are reduced to fabricating a difference by misrepresenting Democratic policies. Unable, until the Soviet shift that followed Stalin's death, to make any headway in Korea or to take a new tack with respect to the defense of Western Europe, they simply took over the Truman policies while attempting to saddle their opponents with the collapse of Nationalist China and Stalin's betrayal of wartime agreements. Toward this line of attack, the Democrats have taken a vigorous but wholly defensive attitude.

The result has not been imaginative, perhaps, or even constructive, but it has served

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to promote a Democratic unity effective enough to thwart an attempted rewriting of history. The same general feeling is likely to come into play if Congressional Republicans try to undo the Truman program indirectly by slashing foreign aid, crippling the reciprocal trade system, or starving the Point Four program.

Members of this liberal caucus readily admit that it is no more than an *ad hoc* grouping. "We don't want to work out an elaborate program on issues," one of them told me, "because they might be no good by 1956." They count, further, on three major sources of help: Republican inertia, Republican blunders, and Republican disunity.

THERE is general agreement, not only in this liberal caucus but everywhere in Washington, that the Republicans are already paying a high price for the foolhardy pledges of their campaign. "They are overpromised," as one Democratic Senator puts it, "on Korea, on fiscal policy, and on farm prices"—all potential dynamite at the polls. Yet this same Senator feels that once the Republicans have settled down and mastered the tricks of governing, they may dig in for a long stretch of power. The Democrats, he points out, were able to cling to office because they had in Roosevelt the combination of a great popular figure and a great political strategist. The Republicans have the popular figure in Eisenhower and the strategist in the team of Thomas E. Dewey and Herbert Brownell.

The Senator went on to say that Dewey-Brownell might arm Eisenhower's administration with the same shrewd technique that has kept the Republicans in control at Albany for the past ten years; namely, a basic conservatism tempered by as much in the way of concession to reform as might be required to keep the opposition slightly but constantly off balance. Thus he expects no open fight by the administration against organized labor, enough support for civil rights legislation to keep the Negroes at least divided, pressure for changes in the Immigration Act to satisfy other minority groups, and the like. It requires no high degree of cynicism to note that whether these concessions are made out of conviction or expediency, they are directed precisely to those urban areas where the non-Southern Democrats have traditionally found their greatest strength—but where last November they revealed new and surprising weakness.

The probability that this will be the general approach of the new administration naturally influences the tactical plans of the liberal Democrats, and in a way ideally fits into them. For if there is one point on which they are in full agreement, it is that the administration must sooner or later come to open warfare, if not with the gilt-edged Tories led by Taft, then certainly with the wild men in the party for whom McCarthy speaks. Any administration concessions of a liberal hue, on issues foreign or domestic, must speed the day of battle, and indeed on such matters as government reorganization, taxation, wartime agreements with Russia, and the appointment of Ambassador Bohlen, the rumbling has been more than audible. "If [the administration] goes on at this pace," the anti-Eisenhower Chicago *Tribune* complained bitterly after the first two months, "it will not be remembered for any 'hundred days' but will go down as the administration that promoted the lost weekend into a continuous operation."

Naturally enough, a major tactical aim of the Congressional liberals is to exploit such an opening in every possible way. It was no coincidence that the Democrats voted en bloc in committee to strengthen Eisenhower's hand in reorganizing the executive branch, knowing well that the patronage-hungry Republicans had suddenly become cool toward a whittling down of that old devil bureaucracy. Neither is it a secret that by keeping at arm's length from McCarthy, Senate liberals hope not only to avoid unpleasant encounters with him—no doubt a strong consideration in itself—but to speed the day when Eisenhower himself must finally come to grips with that gentleman. Any hostile move by the Democrats, the theory goes, would only rally the Republicans to Mc-

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Carthy's side and be interpreted by the public as a partisan attack.

Wherever possible, Democrats are letting the country know that its still popular President has had to draw help from them while his own party is letting him down. Senator Humphrey's "newsletter" to the voters of Minnesota, for example, chattily lets his readers in on a White House luncheon for Democratic Senators at which "we told the President that the way it looked now, he had more support from us than from the Republicans." Of course, "it was all in good humor," he adds—but he doesn't fail to make the point. Neither does Senator Douglas, who says bluntly that if the President's belief in collective security is to be implemented, it will have to be "with the help of Democrats."

TO AMERICAN liberals who for twenty years have identified themselves, intermittently perhaps and with varying degrees of enthusiasm, with the group in power, the leadership I have described must seem minor in key and narrow in purpose. But the most cursory study of the Eisenhower personnel, not to mention the nature of the Republican leadership on Capitol Hill, suggests strongly that this interlude of muted opposition is not destined to last, however circumspect the Dewey-Brownell technique. Old issues are not dead but merely dormant and new ones are a-borning. The preponderance of big business around the President all but assures a revival of the struggle to preserve the public lands for the public, to protect the natural resources of the country, and to keep the anti-monopoly statutes alive and working. All of which, as Senator Monroney suggests, should gradually reawaken enthusiasm for progressive government and take the country past the "fatigue point" which it reached early in the Truman administration.

It is one thing, of course, for Washington tacticians to talk of "fatigue points" and to plan for Republican mistakes, but liberals back home, innocent of the pressures of office, want stronger stuff as a rule. They can have it—if they make it themselves. And they had better start making it if they expect to have a hand in the resurgence of the Democratic party—or of liberalism itself, for that matter.

What I mean is not the drafting of bold new programs and heady manifestos. It is senseless to talk of political planning on order, and senseless to imagine that in any case such planning will not emerge spontaneously, some of it valuable and some of it dreamy, just as before. Without for a minute belittling the need for long-range, programmatic work—especially on such mounting issues as control of peacetime atomic energy, reform of Congressional investigating procedures, and indeed the whole complex question of economic security and statism—I want to suggest something quite different and probably more trying for those of us who now go by the not too endearing name of "egghead." I mean simply participation—social, political, and cultural—in the day-to-day life of the local community, where the political climate of the nation is generated.

This is hardly an original idea or one offered merely to fill a gap. It is the answer of liberal Congressmen who do not dare to stand up to McCarthy and Company, for example, because they would be voted out of office; because their mail is loaded with approval of the kind of Congressional activity we have been witnessing lately. This applies, by the way, as much to Congressmen from Manhattan as to those from Nevada. It is from the districts, the precincts, and the wards that a shift in the wind must come. "Politics," Senator Humphrey will tell you, "is 99 per cent feeling"—on the part of the voter and, through him, on the part of his representatives. And right now that feeling is not conducive to liberalism, either in civil liberties or foreign affairs.

IT NEED hardly be argued here that no such shift toward liberalism is being stimulated by the press or over the air. The hope, therefore, is that those who feel strongly about such matters will stop talking to themselves

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and start talking to their neighbors. They can't talk to them until they know them, as one Senate liberal emphasized in the course of a conversation. And they can't hope to persuade them until they have won their confidence by working with them, in PTA's, in school committees, in welfare drives, and wherever else they can serve the community.

There must be no thought here of infiltrating, much less of seeking organizational power, but merely the aim to know and be known; of letting it gradually sink into the consciousness of the community that intellectuals, "eggheads" if you will, are townspeople no different from their fellows, that liberals are not the devilish caricatures of Senator McCarthy's demonology. Only in this way can the suspicion in which the intellectual has increasingly come to be held be dissipated and the "know-nothings" effectively combated where it counts—on their own home grounds. Only in this way can the liberal who finds himself in a small minority establish his personal credit, get a hearing for his views, and in the long run affect the political climate of the country. For the climate in which the McCarthys and Veldes now bask is real and nationwide, not merely a hot wind on Capitol Hill.

CERTAINLY this is no invitation to liberals to abandon the fields in which they already work or to forego the larger views which give them direction. But a potent effect of this back-to-the-soil movement, politically speaking, would be a long-needed shift of their sights, allowing not only a continued view of national and international horizons, but also a good look at state and local government, on which, like it or not, the political health of the country fundamentally depends. On that level the liberal will discover more than enough to challenge his abilities.

With extremes of statism now plaguing the world, more and more liberals, Stevenson among them, have been leaning away from federalism as an automatic solution of political and social ills; but it would be either foolish or disingenuous to preach decentralization unless something were done to clean up corrupt and gerrymandered legislatures. There is no point in suggesting that, after all, certain types of social legislation *should* be left to the states if their inadequate and inequitable tax systems are not changed enough to make such legislation feasible. Here is an almost virgin field for active liberals.

To be sure, states' rights talk has in the past almost invariably been a subterfuge, but it need not be. For twenty years shabby politicians have invoked decentralization in the name of Jeffersonian democracy when what they really had in mind was the fact that they could control state and local machinery more readily than national. To this strategy, two alternative responses are possible: to write off state and local mechanisms as hopeless and press for more and more federal controls; or to throw into state and local politics the energy and talent necessary to make it democratic, honest, and efficient.

By and large, liberals have tended to choose the first alternative, and in the emergency of the early 30's, when swift action was needed, that was undoubtedly the practical thing to do. But it is not in the long run either practical or wise to count on injections of democracy from the top. If there was one serious misconception induced by the heady days of the New Deal, it was this notion that the public would indefinitely sanction the bestowal of benefits, however desirable, by an elite, however admirable.

If there is to be a resurgence of liberalism, in the absence of severe economic pressure and in the face of external threat, it will have to be a liberalism that rises from the countryside, the towns, and the suburbs, mounting slowly and solidly through painfully renovated town boards, city councils, and state legislatures. For Pennsylvania Republicans on Capitol Hill the one factor that weighs against national drift and personal inclination is last year's Democratic-liberal *coup* in Philadelphia. Let that pattern begin to show up elsewhere and Congressmen, ever the most sensitive of weathercocks, will be the first to swing with the changing breeze.

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WAS MALENKOV BEHIND THE ANTI-SEMITIC PLOT?

The Doctors' Frame-up and Its Reversal

FRANZ BORKENAU

THE manner of the latest shift on anti-Semitism by the Soviet regime seems to confirm what a few close observers had alerted opinion to even prior to the Prague trial—that the key to the mystery of the intensification of official Communist anti-Semitism, both in Russia and the satellites, lay in the intrigue around the sudden death of Andrei Alexandrovitch Zhdanov on August 31, 1948.

It was immediately rumored that Zhdanov, regarded as Stalin's heir apparent, had been murdered. Four and a half years later, on January 13, 1953, Moscow announced that nine doctors, six of them Jewish, had "confessed" to the crime, done—they said—on behalf of Zionism and at the orders of the American intelligence service. It was this news that gave the signal for the beginning of the furious anti-Semitic campaign—camouflaged as "anti-Zionism"—inside the USSR.

Two and a half months passed. Stalin had died meanwhile, and Georgi Malenkov become his ostensible successor. Then it was announced from Moscow that the nine physicians—and six more whose arrest had not been made public before—were being released because it had been discovered they were the victims of a frame-up, and now their accusers were to be punished instead. Soviet propaganda itself during the same period had made a turn of 180 degrees and was now loudly professing understanding and peace with the West, including even the United States. From this some observers have drawn the conclusions that it was the friends of Zhdanov, himself suspected of anti-Semitism, who were responsible for the campaign against the Jews—and that Malenkov, once he achieved power, had countered the stroke of his former rival's clique.

The truth, however, more likely runs in quite another direction. Let us go back a little in time.

THE focus of the contending ambitions of Zhdanov and Malenkov had been the leadership of the Secretariat of the Russian Communist party's Central Committee. In 1946 Malenkov had been replaced in that post by Zhdanov, only to regain it almost immediately after the latter's death two years later.

It was then that Soviet anti-Semitism first declared itself openly and officially. In October or November 1948 General Antonov, Jewish chief of staff of the Red Army, was supplanted by General Shtemenko, a Gentile. The six leading Yiddish writers of the Soviet Union were arrested and subsequently disappeared. The cult that had formed around the memory of Simon Mik-

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FROM its inception, many of the keenest political writers on Soviet affairs were convinced that the new official anti-Semitism was connected with some power intrigue within the regime, as well as with a turn in relations with the world outside. Speculation, as always, had to do what it could with the bits and pieces breaking through the Iron Curtain; and, with the dramatic reversal on the "doctor's plot," master-minding has been fast and furious. FRANZ BORKENAU would be the first to admit the large element of speculation involved in the analysis he offers here. Withal, in view of his warning, in a German newspaper a few weeks before Stalin's death, that the arrest of the Kremlin medical staff meant that Stalin's own life was probably in danger, informed opinion here and abroad will follow this analysis with keen attentiveness, and, we daresay, profit. Mr. Borkenau is author of a history of the Communist International, and of *The Spanish Cockpit*. His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "The Chances of a Mao-Stalin Rift" (August 1952).

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hoels, the famous Jewish actor and community leader who had died earlier that year, was suddenly hushed, and his name not again mentioned officially until it appeared in the indictment of the nine doctors. At the same time the Yiddish newspaper *Einigkeit*, the Yiddish theater in Moscow, and a number of other Jewish institutional activities were all suspended. Recognition of the Jews in the USSR as a national minority was withdrawn.

Except perhaps for Antonov's demotion, all this was public knowledge. What was not sufficiently remarked, however, was how close together all these steps against the Jews came in time—and, above all, how closely they followed upon Zhdanov's death and Malenkov's assumption of his vacated post.

As evidence that Zhdanov was anti-Semitic, the campaign he started against "cosmopolitanism" is usually cited. But that campaign was simply part of Zhdanov's general anti-Western line—his endeavor to wipe out the liberal and Westernizing tendencies that had been awakened in Russia by the wartime alliance with Britain and America—and its most prominent victims were not Jews, but ethnic Russians like Zoshchenko, the satirical writer, and Shostakovich, the composer. After Zhdanov's death, however, certain seemingly small verbal changes were made in his slogans. But they were of the kind that always have great importance in official Soviet pronouncements. Now the adjective "homeless," never applied before 1949, was added to "cosmopolitan," which left no doubt that Jews were meant. Thus it would seem to be Malenkov who made Jew-baiting official policy. This would confirm the persistent rumor that it was he who was the leading instigator of anti-Semitism in the Kremlin before Stalin's death.

Malenkov was at one with Zhdanov in hostility to the West—but anti-Westernism can lead to divergent and contradictory forms of concrete political action. Zhdanov's anti-Westernism was strongly colored by Leninist tradition; and it was he who promoted, founded, and bossed the Cominform, whose chief mission it was to reverse the policy of cooperation with liberal and democratic elements that most of the Communist parties of the West, and some in East Europe, had carried over from the days of wartime underground resistance. To effect this change, Zhdanov counted on the help of a number of Communist leaders in the satellite countries, foremost among whom was Tito. No longer deeming it necessary to observe that caution towards the West which the menace of Nazi Germany had imposed on Soviet leadership, Zhdanov strove to revive the Leninist faith in world revolution among the various Communist parties. A new international command was to be created that would lead the faithful to victory in the third world war that was just around the corner.

This was the tenor of Zhdanov's acts as Cominform leader, and also of a famous pamphlet by his closest friend, Voznesensky, arguing that the war potential of the Communist world was already far superior to the West's. (Malenkov rejected this absurd view, and so in the end did Stalin.) What it is important to notice in this context, however, is that such an internationalist, world-revolutionary line could not have been made compatible with anti-Semitism.

THERE is more positive evidence of Zhdanov's attitude. He relied greatly on the support of leaders of Jewish origin in the struggles for power that took place inside many of the satellite Communist parties—and particularly in Czechoslovakia, where the putsch of February 1948 represented the victory of party-secretary Slansky's group over that of the late Klement Gottwald. Gottwald is known to have opposed the *coup* (Douglas Hyde, ex-editor of the London *Daily Worker*, has supplied details to confirm this), holding that Communism could come to power in Czechoslovakia by peaceful means. After the Prague "revolution," for which Zhdanov himself is said to have given the signal, Gottwald felt hardly safer than President Benes: and in the life-and-death struggle that ensued between his group and Slansky's, most of whom were Jewish as well as pro-Zhdanov, he and his follow-

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ers became ever more openly anti-Semitic. There were parallel, if less spectacular, anti-Semitic developments in other satellites.

Inside Russia herself, the *Zhdanovshchina,* or anti-Western campaign, did not strike any prominent Jews. Of course, there were any number of anti-Jewish administrative pinpricks, but to take these as evidence of a deliberate anti-Semitic policy on the top levels would require more belief than is justified in the official myth of monolithic Communist unity. There are deep differences within the Soviet leadership, and "deviating" subordinates often have the *sub rosa* backing of highly placed persons who are in disagreement with the official line and even ready to sabotage it.

The case of the late Simon Mikhoels is an example. He was the only deceased person whose name appeared in the list of the accused in the Moscow "doctors' plot" (one of these doctors appears to have been a brother of his). During the war, and also during the subsequent short-lived honeymoon with Israel, Mikhoels—whose real name was Vovsi and who had won fame as an actor and a leader of the Jewish community inside Russia—was sent abroad on important Soviet missions. Early in 1948 he went on a trip to Minsk from which he did not return. His death was announced some time later, but with no details. Obviously he had met a violent end, and it was equally obvious that no one was being punished for it. It was rumored that he had been killed by pro-Nazi partisans still at large in White Russia; but the suspicion grew that he had really been assassinated with official connivance.

"Official" in this connection, however, was an ambiguous term. The Soviet Union was to continue to show friendliness towards Israel for some time afterwards; this was part of official policy, and it is highly improbable that those controlling that policy should have winked at the murder of one of the chief spokesmen of Soviet-Israeli friendship. Rather, the guilty parties are to be sought among those elements in the top leadership who were against Jews in general and Israel in particular, but who were not then determining the official line. They only came to power later on, after Zhdanov's death. Further support for this hypothesis is supplied by the fact that Mikhoels' memory was made practically the object of an official cult during the few more months that Zhdanov remained alive, and that only Malenkov's climb back to power put a stop to it.

The whole Mikhoels episode gives one a glimpse of the sort of dissension that divides the Kremlin. Even five years ago it could lead to the spilling of blood. And always it had, and still has, direct implications for Soviet foreign policy. (Molotov, then as now head of the Foreign Ministry, agreed with Zhdanov on the necessity of breaking with the West, though it is doubtful whether he wanted as aggressive a policy as the latter. As a rule, however, he formed a common bloc with Zhdanov and Voznesensky inside the Politburo, and it is significant that the phase of amity with Israel coincided with the short period during which the Zhdanov-Voznesensky-Molotov bloc was on top in the Kremlin.)

IT SHOULD be plain, then, that Zhdanov's supposed anti-Semitism does not square with the known facts. Just as little does the hypothesis that holds recent Soviet anti-Semitism to be a response to popular feeling surviving from the time of the czars.

It would be equally wrong to suppose that the anti-Semitism of Malenkov and his group was a mere matter of personal prejudice. The motivation was definitely political, and had its roots in the nature and general development of the Soviet social order.

Since at least 1919 the presence of a new upper class in Russia has been a prime factor in every struggle inside the Communist party of that country. One part of this new class—the party hierarchy and the officials of the secret police—wields exclusive political power. The other part—the higher-ranking army officers, the members of the civil administration, the managers of industry and finance—though indispensable, lacks political

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voice. The first has developed into a dominant, but increasingly insulated, sub-class of party bureaucrats and police officials who bear down hard on the rest of the population; the other section of the upper class, made up of "technocrats"—generals, administrators, and factory bosses—strains unceasingly against this monopoly of political power that excludes themselves.

These stresses and strains also have their national, or ethnic, side, as class differences in Eastern Europe have had since time immemorial. This serves further to embitter antagonisms provoked by the Communist restratification of society. But ethnic, and racial, issues are less at stake in the case of the party as such than in that of the secret police. The Soviet secret police has from the very beginning always recruited a large proportion of its personnel from "allogenes," the border or minority peoples of the old czarist empire—Letts, Jews, and Poles at first, then Caucasians. And the power of that police, whether called the Cheka, GPU, NKVD, or MGB, has always been felt by large sections of Soviet citizenry as a power wielded by outsiders over "true" Russians.

Organized physical force counts for more in a totalitarian society than in most other kinds—as we already saw with Hitler's Germany. In the USSR, the secret police monopolizes it on the "party side," the army on the "non-party side." Though party crises in the Soviet Union have usually looked from the outside like struggles between purely party factions, actually antagonisms between the army and the secret police have almost always played some role. And what has always been at issue underneath is who was to have the upper hand in terms of physical force.

For decades the secret police has had that upper hand, unquestionably. But it never has quite managed to achieve a position of complete security. During the civil war in the early days of the Soviet regime, officers and even generals from the czarist army who had sided with the Bolsheviks—and who were all the more valuable to them because so few—were subjected to never-ending humiliations and bullying by police agents in the guise of political commissars who were almost invariably non-Russian, and more often than not incompetent and grotesquely rude. At a very early date, before there was any question of restricting the powers of the police in civilian life, concessions had to be made to the Red Army's resentment of the GPU: the political commissars were withdrawn in 1926, and during the next ten years the army was the only place in Russian life that could offer a young man a real career in which he did not have to worry unduly about being arrested or executed. But the secret police, renamed the NKVD, got its revenge when the Great Purge started in 1936. The political commissars were brought back into the army, and Commander-in-Chief Tukhachevsky, almost his entire staff, and no less than 30,000 commissioned officers were shot.

Stalin, in his cunning, had seen to it that the political commissars attached to the army were this time, too, preponderantly "allogene"—in order to narrow the risk of any spontaneous sympathy between them and the officers, who were mostly Russian. And at the head of the political administration of the Red Army, Stalin had put Mekhlis, a Jew, to organize the massacre.

A few weeks after the official news of the "doctors' plot" came out in Moscow, Mekhlis suddenly died. Whatever the real cause of his death, the leaders of the Russian army had reason to see in it a blow struck for their side by the anti-Semitic faction in the party. Since the days of the 1936 purge, anti-Semitism in the army had grown fat on hatred of the NKVD, which was identified with Mekhlis, the Jew, in particular, and with Jews and outsiders in general. *A step against Jews by any party faction was therefore to be seen as a bid to the army's anti-Semites for support against the secret police.* Those persons in the Kremlin who had framed the doctors and announced Mehklis's demise seemed to be saying to the army, in terms not veiled to a Soviet citizen: "We have delivered you from the Jews who

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were after your lives. Help us to supreme power, and we will see that you are rid of the Jews forever."

But, again, let us go back a little. After the first defeats at the hands of the invading Germans in 1941, it became once more necessary, as in 1926, to make concessions to the army. Mekhlis was relieved of his post and replaced by General (later Marshal) Shcherbakov, who was a very different sort of man. For one thing, he was the first Great Russian ever to serve as chief political commissar of the army; for another, he was entirely indifferent to party doctrine, friendly to the Orthodox Church, addicted to pre-Revolutionary military traditions, and —how could such a Russian not be?—a confirmed anti-Semite. Shcherbakov soon achieved the unique distinction of being co-opted into the Politburo, though he was not even a government minister. Under his guidance, the trend of official Red Army ideology was completely reversed, with non-party patriotism made the dominant note, and the old-style officers' hierarchy installed.

Malenkov seems to have cooperated with Shcherbakov to some extent, and there was a full understanding, apparently, between the latter and Marshal Zhukov, the darling of the Red Army. But both generals had their adversaries, who were of two camps: first, the old-line Communists, especially the secret police, who were biding their time and waiting for the end of the war; second, a group of high officers inside the army who disagreed with Zhukov and Shcherbakov over the political aspects of military strategy.

Shcherbakov had founded an official cult dedicated to Kutusov, the general who led the czar's armies to victory over Napoleon in 1812. Kutusov was a fierce xenophobe, but more important was the caution, the avoidance of unnecessary losses, that had characterized his generalship; moreover, he was known for his steadfast opposition to any war that involved fighting beyond the borders of the Holy Russian Fatherland. The faction in the Red Army's high command that disagreed with Shcherbakov and Zhukov wanted to conquer large territories beyond Russia's confines, regardless of the cost in casualties. The most ardent spokesman of this position appears to have been Marshal Guvorov, Zhdanov's personal military adviser; but Marshal Vasilievsky, one of Molotov's closest friends, was its soberer and weightier advocate. In any event, it was on the basis of this disagreement in the Red Army's high command that Stalin, Zhdanov, Molotov, and Beria regained the upper hand over it after the war.

On May 11, 1945, three days after the close of hostilities, Shcherbakov suddenly died. Never did a death come more opportunely—for certain people. As in Mekhlis's case, threads lead directly from this event to the "doctors' plot" in January 1953, for the Jewish doctors also had confessed to murdering Shcherbakov. That he was indeed murdered is highly probable—but hardly as result of a "Zionist conspiracy": the finger of suspicion points to the usual quarter—Stalin. *Cui bono?* is never an unfair question when it comes to the crimes of Stalinist politics.

Those in the Kremlin who extorted the confessions from the nine doctors were making their first bid to the Red Army. Here they were prosecuting and bringing to "justice" the assassins of that army's most valiant spokesman, just as they were also to bring to "justice" its most execrated enemy, Mekhlis, by having him die. And the fact that Shcherbakov was now "revealed" to have been the victim of a "Zionist plot" implied unmistakably that the natural enemies of the Red Army command were always "the" Jews. *Whichever way we look at it, the new anti-Semitism in the Kremlin seemed at every point to involve a bid for army support.*

But why were the Jewish doctors forced to "confess" to the murder of Zhdanov as well? That he, too, had died at the moment most opportune for Stalin seems incontestable—had he not been implicated in Tito's break with the Kremlin, which had become final only a few weeks before Zhdanov died? And that the Kremlin's doctors

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actually had a hand in this death is not implausible, though it is by no means certain either. What is certain is that if Zhdanov—and Shcherbakov—had indeed been murdered, the guilty party was Stalin. But whereas the tale of a Jewish plot against Shcherbakov might be expected to hold water in the eyes of the generals, could the same story be expected to hold water with respect to Zhdanov, the internationalist? At second glance, however, the logic becomes visible. The anti-Semitic faction in the Kremlin wanted to make a bid to the officers of the Guvorov and Vasilievsky faction as well as to those of Zhukov's—and what better way for the moment than by blaming "the" Jews for the murder of that faction's protector, too?

What was left out of the indictment of the nine doctors is no less significant than what was put in. One Shikin, an outspoken adherent of Zhdanov, was made head of the army's political department after Shcherbakov's death. He did not last long, being replaced shortly by General Bulganin, a close associate of Lazar Kaganovich (who was opposed to both Zhdanov and Malenkov). It was Bulganin who brought the Red Army back under the party's control, and it is significant that his name was not included in the list of military leaders supposedly marked for death by the "Jewish doctors' conspiracy." This would appear to mean that the engineers of the anti-Semitic campaign were, by implication, inviting the army to strike out against political interference. By omitting Bulganin's name, they seemed to be saying: "The Jews are out to kill the commanders of the army and navy, not interlopers like Bulganin, who are really civilians and party tools."

IT EMERGES that anti-Semitism as such was used by Malenkov as a weapon in his struggle with the party's left wing, and that the main object of the recent wave of official anti-Semitism inside the USSR proper was therefore to win the army's support against that left wing.

But why, having started his anti-Semitic campaign back in 1948 as soon as he had won his place of power, hadn't Malenkov carried it through to its logical conclusion by a wholesale elimination of every Jew who held high office in the party? Also, why, after the long interlude of relative calm since his first anti-Semitic move back in 1948, was he now, in the second half of 1952, so eager for the army's support?

Malenkov was unable to go the whole hog against his opponents in the party—and against the Jews of the Soviet Union—because he failed in the end to get a secure enough hold on that supreme personal power which seemed to have fallen into his hands on Zhdanov's death. This failure was revealed in the purges consequent on Tito's defection. Without question, some genuine Zhdanovites in Russia and some authentic Titoists in the Balkans (Dimitrov in Bulgaria, Markos, the Greek guerrilla general, and Xoxe in Albania) were struck down. But the most sensational cases involved in the purging of the "Titoists" were Gomulka's in Poland, Kostov's in Bulgaria, and Rajk's in Hungary—and all three of these satellite leaders were loyal *anti*-Titoists of long standing. It was during this same period, the years 1949 and 1950, that Gottwald in Czechoslovakia, an anti-Titoist if there ever was one, had most reason to fear for his life. Somebody, somehow, had got hold of the whole anti-Titoist operation and turned it on the anti-Titoists themselves!

How was such a thing possible? I believe that the answer is relatively simple. Every time one of Stalin's heirs apparent thrust his head up above his fellows in the Politburo, the latter joined hands to pull him down. While Zhdanov was alive, Beria was one of his most determined opponents, and so was Bulganin. But after he died they both got together with Molotov, who until then had sided with Zhdanov, to form a "left" bloc in order to frustrate Malenkov's bid for supreme power. The hand of that bloc can be recognized in the treatment given the Zhdanovites in the satellite countries in the first years after Zhdanov's death. Slansky, Ana Pauker, Gerö in Hungary,

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and others were not purged, but simply swallowed up by a new group of leaders, who continued the fight against Malenkov.

The Beria-Bulganin-Molotov bloc also succeeded in merging or coordinating apparatuses of Soviet power that had hitherto been separate and often in competition: the secret police (MGB), the foreign services, the army's political services, and the old Comintern. A sanguinary vengeance was wreaked in the "people's democracies," not on the Titoists, but on those who had taken the break with Tito for the signal to move against the left wings—and Jews—in their own local Communist parties. (Rajk, in particular, had been known as an anti-Semite.) Thus the anti-Semitic campaign that Malenkov had started in Russia in the fall of 1948 was arrested among the satellites, and soon scotched at home, too.

Eventually, Malenkov was again able to resort to anti-Semitism in his struggle for power. But this time he had to make a detour through Prague. It was easier to effect a bloody solution at the periphery of Soviet power than at the center.

WHEN it attacked Slansky and his fellows, Malenkov's anti-Semitic faction was aiming at its enemies in Moscow, Molotov and Beria. It was these two who were to be got at ultimately by the charge of Zionist and American espionage. Within the framework of the life-and-death struggle between Malenkov and the "left" bloc—a struggle still going on—no humbler victims would do. The fierce attack by insinuation on the Soviet security services that broke out in the Russian press immediately after the announcement of the "doctors' plot" bears out this supposition.

It would appear that Malenkov chose anti-Semitism in his attack on Beria and Molotov because he had no other weapon available. His feud with them had become a naked struggle for power in which larger issues no longer counted, and resort had to be taken to more inflammatory and personal ones—like anti-Semitism. But because Malenkov aimed at the very lives of his opponents in the party he put his own life in jeopardy.

Every time in the past that a younger man had risen to prominence in the party Stalin had at first supported him, next had pulled wires to form a bloc against him, had then maneuvered him into compromising himself by extreme courses, and in the end had had him killed off. Kirov in the 30's and Zhdanov in the 40's had both met the same fate. While Stalin still lived Malenkov had reason to fear that his fate would be like theirs, and he must have felt compelled, especially during this last year, to move fast. The Beria-Molotov faction was mobilizing to knock him down—with Stalin's help possibly. An open, desperate appeal for the army's support could no longer be delayed; he might soon lose his power to stage "plots." And so he played his last card.

The "doctors' plot" was part of that card, the main part—but it was also something more, more even than anti-Semitism. And more than a move against the "left" bloc alone (now reinforced by Khrushchev, possibly the most up-and-coming of all the Soviet bosses). It was a move against Stalin.

Three of the doctors named in the "plot" —Yegorov, Vinogradov, and Mayorov—were not Jews. These were the three who had signed most of the death certificates of the Soviet leaders who died in the past, and the first two were known to be Stalin's personal, private physicians. The signatures appended to the official bulletins on the progress of Stalin's last sickness were those of doctors entirely new to the Kremlin, the name of not a single one of the old Kremlin medical staff appearing. That whole staff, obviously, had been incarcerated, and it included more than those doctors actually named in the "plot." As we now know, fifteen Kremlin doctors, not merely the nine originally named, had been arrested. And the whole frame-up, beyond being a blow at Beria and Bulganin, an anti-Semitic provocation, and a bid for the army's support, had also, as it turned out, been a move to eliminate the medical staff that had in the past so faithfully liquidated troublesome Politburo members on Stalin's order, all the while that it

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had guarded his own health. Obviously, Malenkov had reason to fear that he too might one day become a victim of that medical execution squad. After all, Stalin was then still alive.

MALENKOV'S diabolical frame-up technique—worthy of his mentor and late master as technique alone—and his anti-Semitism have, as is plain by now, availed him nothing. Rarely has political crime been so immediately unrewarding. With Stalin's death, anti-Semitism vanished completely from the Soviet press. It became evident that the army had refused to fall for the "doctors' plot." Nor did Malenkov have any better success with his attacks on the secret police.

But besides having to renounce his dream of succeeding to Stalin's full powers, he had also to accept the abolition of important organizational changes that had cost him years of struggle to put through. The Politburo reappeared under a new name, with the control of large and powerful administrative departments restored to its members. Back in the fall of 1948, under Malenkov's own prompting, these departments had been taken away from the direct supervision of the Politburo and split up.

A few days later in March, Malenkov even had to give up his exclusive possession of the party Secretariat. The upshot was that his rivals got back everything they had lost, while he was the only one to lose powers held before. The key man in the new setup is indisputably Beria, and speculation that he and Malenkov may be allies is refuted by the simple and obvious fact that Beria owes the new strength he now has to the wiping out of every organizational change Malenkov had effected since 1948.

The news from behind the Iron Curtain since the first few days after Stalin's unlamented death reveals an unbroken succession of defeats for Malenkov. A week after Stalin's funeral in Moscow, Klement Gottwald, spearhead of the whole anti-Semitic campaign and the man whose Jew-baiting had cleared the way for Malenkov's, was dead. He had returned from the funeral in the best of health—*but* accompanied by two of Beria's finest doctors—and had reviewed a parade the day after his arrival in Prague. Then, three days later, he succumbed to pneumonia. Such a quick death is very unusual in the case of pneumonia, and the Czech doctors who did the post-mortem on Gottwald's body refused to confirm the diagnosis; in their communiqué they, in fact, specifically denied that pneumonia had been the cause of death, and diagnosed it as "arteriosclerosis" instead.

Then, at the end of March, came the official repudiation of the "doctors' plot," with the arrest of the prosecutor and the dismissal from office of his superior, both of them Malenkov henchmen. This probably bodes more ill for Malenkov than any of the other reverses he has recently suffered. Beria seems to be taking his revenge step by step. Still, it would be a mistake to regard the repudiation of the "doctors' plot" as having exclusively to do with the struggle for power at the summit of the Soviet hierarchy. It probably betokens something more.

That more was revealed in the new peace campaign launched, not only at the bidding of Malenkov personally, but with the support of the whole Soviet government—and with Malenkov's name getting less and less prominence in the whole business. This new tactic—for tactic is what it is—was originally sponsored by Stalin and Malenkov, before and during the recent 19th Congress of the Russian Communist party, against Molotov's ill-concealed opposition. But if Malenkov is so weak that his anti-Semitic program could be shelved, as it has been, how does it happen that his peace campaign is being continued—nay more, speeded up? The answer would be that this isn't the first time in the history of Stalinist Russia that the chief advocate of a certain policy was pushed to the wall and prepared for liquidation while his policy was being hurriedly put into effect and even carried to an extreme.

A RATHER obvious motive that might be suggested for the peace campaign may be

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the desperate need for external calm of a new regime being shaken to its depths by internal strife. But this explanation really accounts for little, since the Soviet rulers themselves know that they are not now threatened by Western aggression, and that America will not in the foreseeable future be tempted to start a war by a moment of temporary weakness on their part. (They are better posted on this than millions of liberals in the West.) Just as little as the cessation of the anti-Semitic campaign, can the high-pressure methods of the new peace campaign be explained solely by the stresses of the inner party struggle.

On the other hand, the peace campaign and the abandonment of official anti-Semitism do seem to be connected with the amnesty proclaimed on March 27 by the Soviet regime. Although, according to the official text, political prisoners have been expressly excluded from its benefits, an inherent momentum seems to be carrying developments beyond the intentions of those initiating them.

A new and powerful current seems to be at work in the Soviet Union, and its origin may have to be sought in the non-party areas of Soviet life, among the generals and industrial managers whose silent pressure has been so strong yet inarticulate a factor in every intra-party struggle. Now that the Communist party structure in the USSR seems in danger of crumbling at the top, these generals and managers may have become emboldened to present demands and try to strike bargains in return for their support (perhaps through the mediation of Marshal Zhukov or some other personality, unknown to the West). Thus it may be the managerial and military interests that are responsible for the relaxation, such as it is, of the terror and for the hectic pace of the peace campaign.

And since, during the last phase of reign by total terror, anti-Semitism had become a prominent feature of official party policy, may this same upper section of Soviet society not have a real interest in also seeing that the anti-Semitic program is called off—though for reasons other than Beria's and Molotov's? Today the recent anti-Semitism campaign in Soviet Russia is being washed away by a great groundswell.*

But it would be a great mistake to be undilutedly optimistic about the future of anti-Semitism in Russia. The recent dramatic change of line betokens no real change of heart on any bureaucrat's part. It is the exceptional Soviet ruler who does not down at bottom fear and hate the invincibly critical Jewish spirit.

Simply because Malenkov was using anti-Semitism to point a pistol at their heads, his rivals had, for the sake of self-preservation, to put a stop to it. But the basic attitude of the managerial and other upper-class elements in Russia is still more or less anti-Semitic—after all, it was by appealing to their anti-Semitism that Malenkov had hoped to win their support. And if the army generals refused to respond favorably (and thereby gave Malenkov his decisive defeat) it was mostly for tactical reasons and because they wanted, before anything else, to break a few links in the system of totalitarian rule that was suffocating them. Once this class feel reasonably free of the terror, there can be little doubt that anti-Semitism will again become a public issue in Russia.

If the methods of the Soviet regime are actually transformed, Jews will doubtless share in the benefits. But the future may also see a new repudiation of the equality that the 1917 revolution originally bestowed on the Jews of Russia, and that country may return to something like the anti-Semitic discrimination practiced under the czars. But, of course, this depends on whether the generals and managers increase their power.

But whichever way it turns out, Russia will remain for some time to come a backward country with a fund of barbarism not yet exhausted—as the lurid, grotesque, and bloody intrigues I have just tried to explain would show.

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*Belated ripples of anti-Semitism are still being felt in some of the satellite countries—especially in Rumania, under the Georghiu-Dej clique.

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"THE PLEASURE OF THE FISHES"

MARVIN SOLOMON

I AM suspicious of snap decisions. So,
I can never make up my mind.
Unfortunately, I always see the two sides to
Every question—and both at once. Unkind

As it may seem, it saves me from all
Sorts of isms, cocksureness, and endless arguments;
And consequently from cocktail parties and political
Entanglements. But as I said, it also prevents

A healthy yes and no. Perhaps it takes
A special learning to acquire a facility
Of conviction, or certain experiences. To fix
Vacillation one must require the ability

And steadfastness of a calendar, which
Itself reneges four times a year. And then,
There is this detail from a scroll to prove just such
A point. Painted by Chou Tung-ch'ing, Yuan

Dynasty (twelve-eighty to thirteen-sixty-eight),
It shows a graceful carp turning the other cheek
In a stream peculiarly Chinese, dispassionate,
Tea-colored. He is neither sleek,

Nor particularly exciting. There is a hint
Of reeds. But immediately one is satisfied:
There is a rightness and content
Unbroken by the centuries. It is beside

The point that this epitomizes art for art's sake,
That it might have just as well been called:
The Pleasure of the Artist, or, The Pleasure of the Silk
And Water Colors. Whatever willed

It to existence, whatever indolences,
Dynasties, lakes, and summer palaces,
Is secondary to the repose one senses
In this carp's slow curve above the water-cresses

(To evade the heat? to ascertain a dragonfly?)—
The surety beyond all argument
That pleasure, not only for the eye,
But for thought and contemplation, was its sole intent.

MARVIN SOLOMON's work has appeared in the *New Yorker, Hopkins Review, Poetry, New World Writing,* and elsewhere; a book, *First Poems,* was issued last year. Mr. Solomon was born in Baltimore in 1923.

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JEWISH EDUCATION MUST BE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How to Begin in This Age of Doubt

ARTHUR HERTZBERG

THE present resurgence of interest in Jewish education, the increased funds available, the undoubted improvement in educational techniques, the rise in enrollments—however encouraging all these are, they are no guarantees that basic needs are being met, or fundamental educational issues solved. Indeed, they may offer only the illusion of progress—what if we have taken a wrong turn, and are speeding down a road that takes us further and further away from our proper destination? Mounting figures, whether of dollars or enrollment, offer in themselves no reassurance; after all, we recall periods not so very long ago in Jewish history when, on other shores, with much smaller budgets and not a single graduate of a teachers' college, Jewish education showed results that were a matter for pride and which still furnish an example that is the object of nostalgic yearning.

Nor does the striking unanimity today among the various schools of Jewish education testify necessarily to the soundness of the present course. Having grown up in an era that witnessed so many wearying and heartbreaking ideological controversies among Jews, many American Jews now tend to see in unity of opinion the highest of all values; they welcome, accordingly, the increasing signs of agreement among the various educational ideologies. Yet we cannot but notice the air of resigned making-the-best-of-a-hopeless-situation that permeates the movement toward unity; the accord has little in it of conviction or enthusiasm; it is only that seemingly inevitable trends have been accepted as final. There was at least life in the passion with which the various positions used to be expressed through school programs. Now the passion is gone and the ideologies are pale shadows of their former selves. Unanimity is on the way to being achieved by a common surrender to the "facts of life" in America.

Did these "facts" give a real picture of the life of the American Jew one could, while regretting the tone of resignation, salute a new and healthy realism. Unfortunately, this new realism consists mostly in the bewailing of vanished dreams, and the "facts" themselves reveal chiefly a continued misunderstanding of the American Jews. This misunderstanding, in a very real sense, is what now unites the Jewish educators after all the years of acrimony—a misunderstanding based on an over-"practical," often cynical interpretation of the needs and impulses motivating the "layman's" recent increasing interest in Jewish education.

THE education of young American Jews is one of the most perplexing problems the American Jewish community has to face. Numerous movements have proposed—and put into practice—many school systems: Yiddishist and Hebraist, religious and secular, all-day, afternoon, and Sunday. Despite the variety of ideological disputes, practicing educators of all schools have lately arrived at a kind of general consensus as to the education that American Jewish children should get. Here ARTHUR HERTZBERG questions whether this new unity of direction is not being built on "practical" convenience rather than on conviction or a true appraisal of the needs—and deep desires—of American Jews, both parents and children. An educator himself, and, above all, a constructive critic, as those who have read his frequent contributions to this magazine know, Rabbi Hertzberg is not content with negative strictures, but offers his own answers to the problem—or, rather, his own recommendation as to how to begin to deal with it fruitfully. Rabbi Hertzberg was rabbi of West End Synagogue in Nashville until two years ago, when he entered the Air Force as a chaplain; he is now serving in England.

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A DEMONSTRATION of this new unity was the National Conference on Jewish Education that took place in New York two years ago; its very first session included representatives of such diverse tendencies as the Orthodox parochial schools and the Reform Sunday schools. The major intellectual achievement of the gathering was a new definition of the aims and purposes of Jewish education that was embodied in something called "A Charter of the Rights of the Jewish Child," which was adopted unanimously and, by that fact alone, acquired great significance. Here, at last, was a common denominator on which all those most interested in Jewish education were prepared to agree. But in whose image was it proposed to fashion the new Jew?

The first point of the "Charter" defines the tangible content of Jewish education as "an accurate knowledge and sympathetic understanding of the life, the labors, the ideals, the struggles, and the achievements of the Jewish people from the beginnings of their history to the present day." In the next paragraph the kind of Jewish emotional allegiance to be instilled in the child is equated with "a feeling of belonging to the community," and "an understanding of his oneness with his fellow Jews, in the United States, in Israel, and in every corner of the world." The fourth point, trying to dispel any suspicions of parochialism, asserts that such an education will strengthen the child "in commitment to democracy as the way of life most in accord with Jewish teaching, and will awaken in him a deep sense of kinship with all mankind."

A close reading of the Conference resolutions reveals an implicit estimate of the "real" Jewish situation in America, which is seen as a perpetual confrontation with anti-Semitism, actual and potential. It follows of necessity that Jewish authenticity and maturity are attained when the Jew is able to cope successfully with a non-Jewish world that is at best neutral, and not infrequently hostile. The conferees insisted that participation in Jewish group culture would give the child an island to which he could safely retire when threatened by the "outside" world. This reasoning was clothed in the language of progressive education, sprinkled with such terms as "growth," "freedom," and "self-realization." One got the impression that Jewish education was a department of preventive psychotherapy.

But the "Charter of Rights of the Jewish Child" is interesting for more than what it explicitly says. Equally revealing is what is never mentioned. The Lord of Hosts, for instance. In a subsidiary resolution the term *mitzvot* is translated as "virtues and responsibilities," which is a neat way of avoiding the stark, demanding ring of the word "commandments." The Covenant is no longer with the Almighty to whom all Israel once pledged at Sinai: "We will do and we will hear"; it consists rather in a sense of emotional closeness to other Jews.

NOR are parents given much importance in the "Charter." They are mentioned only once, in an auxiliary resolution, and even then only in passing. It is the community as a whole, the national organizations and the fund-raising and fund-disbursing bodies, that are exhorted to take a greater interest in Jewish education. And the need stressed is the need for properly trained and adequately paid teachers and more professionally staffed supervisory bureaus. From this, one might gather that the best educational structure was the one that gave a free hand to the professional educators, without interference from parents. They were to sit back with nothing more to do than pay the necessary bills. The experts would take care of everything else.

This kind of thinking is, among other things, a startling indication of the pervasive influence of the community-organization-*cum*-trained-professional approach to all Jewish problems. Large-scale philanthropy doubtless functions best when a managing group of executives plus functional technicians stand between the individual "lay" Jew—defined chiefly as fund-contributor and -raiser—and the recipient. But that education, and particularly Jewish education, can dis-

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pense largely with the father-child relationship is a novel hypothesis. One wonders about what kind of person this American-Jew-as-father is who can be so blithely bypassed. And is he really the American Jew as he really feels about himself and his child as a Jew—or only a myth born of the community professionals' contempt for, and suspicion of, the "layman"?

The image of the father hovering over the discussions of the Conference was the second-generation Jew who was a "good Jew" —after a certain fashion. He was active in Jewish affairs, including, hopefully, the synagogue, possessed of enough Jewish instruction not to commit any glaring blunders at a service or public function that required the pronunciation of some Hebrew. (Such errors were, however, not irredeemable in the case of those who had "good Jewish hearts," which they proved by devoted labor for such causes as Welfare Funds and the UJA.) A "good Jew" was of necessity concerned for the fair name of his people; he not only lived by high civic standards but also had at his fingertips the answer to any question about the Jewish attitude to Jesus, and he could also prove, with citations, the depth and range of the Jewish Contribution to Civilization. As a "good American" he was active on behalf of the Red Cross and did not cut himself off from American culture by staying home evenings to read Faulkner or Proust (or the Bible) instead of attending dinners where he could shake hands with movie stars in the interest of "better understanding."

What the Conference proposed, in effect, as a valid educational aim, was to produce future generations of American Jews in this image. And one could understand why none of the Conference's resolutions called upon parents to assume any large personal obligations in the educational process; that would have made no more sense than a sculptor's asking his model to help him carve or model the figure he was working on. The parent was to be passive, the educator was to use his art—and lo! the generations would run smoothly on.

In terms of the pure logic of its position, this new Jewish education does not necessarily require a Jewish teacher. A trained group-worker of any background, provided he be sympathetic to "minority" culture and loyalties, could conceivably do as well. He might, indeed, be even more effective than a Jewish teacher, who would probably be encumbered by his own unresolved inner conflicts; the non-Jewish teacher could more calmly approach the task of making Jewish children sympathetic to the evaporating Jewish past, and at the same time well-adjusted and secure. It is only in the dimension of faith that it is obligatory for a Jewish adult to confront a Jewish child in a dialogue across the desk of the classroom or the table at home—in which dialogue the child is taught to hear that the Lord is One, and to recognize Him as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to recognize himself as the Son of the Covenant with Him.

THE Conference's approach assumes that the major Jewish adjustments to the American milieu have already been made, that in the main they are adequate, and that for the foreseeable future the American Jew will not change in any significant respect. All this is highly questionable. The American Jew is not yet completely formed, he is still in transition; and, indeed, precisely the very features of his spiritual physiognomy that the new education proposes to enshrine are those most characteristic of a generation in transition.

These features doubtless do exist, but to believe that their sum provides us with a true picture of the American Jew is superficial. There is more to him than the fact that he has Yiddish-speaking grandparents and wants not to hate himself or be hated for it. Being human, he wonders about the ultimate meaning of life and seeks for some faith and purpose with which to face his death. Being contemporary, he is plagued by a sense of helplessness and futility. Being Jewish, he is confronted by the experiences of the last twenty years more sharply than ever with a sense of peculiar destiny. It is

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in all of these respects that the American Jew most seriously needs to come to terms with himself. To ignore the most personal—and hence most cosmic—feelings of the contemporary Jew means, when translated into educational theory and practice, to cut him off from just those sources of the Jewish heritage that might help him grapple with his loneliness, his demon, and his God.

It can be maintained, perhaps with some truth, that the recent marked increase of metaphysical and theological discussion among Jews reflects the mood only of some intellectuals. Certainly the laity, precisely because they are not articulate, cannot produce and are not producing a fluent verbalization of their own needs. Nevertheless, the very history of Jewish education in America bears witness to an intensified, continuous *religious* seeking on the part of the "average" Jew. Let us consider, for example, the associations evoked by such words as *kaddish, yizkor,* and Bar Mitzvah. Even the most casual reader of the writings of the educators will have become aware of these terms as the *bêtes noires* of Jewish education. They recur again and again as the symbols of that intellectual and spiritual poverty on the part of parents against which the educators fight in the name of some other, more grandiose ideal. But though the champions of Yiddishism, socialism, Hebraism, and humanism have hacked away vigorously and untiringly, these hydra heads have always sprung up again with what have been —to them, the ideologists—ever more frightening visages. Insistently, the parents have urged these words, and the *religion-centered* training of the young that they imply, upon the most diverse schools of Jewish education, including the most revolutionary secular and the most anti-traditional Reform.

And through the years all statistical studies have shown the increasing predominance of the synagogue school over all other forms of Jewish education. More revealing still is the recent growth of the movement for parochial schools. Between 1940 and 1951 the proportion of children attending such institutions in New York City has risen from 8 to 23 per cent of the entire attendance at Jewish schools. Nor is this phenomenon restricted to New York. Recently, indeed, the Conservative movement put itself on record as favoring such schools for at least an initial four years of training, and maximalist voices are being raised in favor of a similar policy even among the Reform. Almost all the existing parochial schools are very Orthodox in their teaching—notoriously more Orthodox than most of the homes from which the children come.

Thus, today, a significant number of American Jews show a willingness to abandon even that most precious of democratic institutions, the public school. Can anything be more indicative of the strength of religious motives behind the interest in Jewish education now felt in the Jewish community?

Countless teachers can bear witness to expressions of this interest that are often bizarre. Is there a Jewish schoolmaster anywhere who has not heard unnumbered times the parental admonition, "Don't make my child too religious," followed usually by: "I don't want him to grow up to be a rabbi"? Nonetheless these same parents illogically continue to ask the Jewish school to produce, by some miracle, *religious* Jews. The basic problem of Jewish education in America is whether this miracle is possible. Can a valid and worthwhile school be created for children whose parents are muddled in their beliefs, to be run by educators who are rather certain of their doubts?

We must take heed, nevertheless, not to be stampeded into solutions by the intensity of the need and the difficulty of the problem. That some, for example, long for the spiritual wholeness of their piously Orthodox parents or grandparents does not necessarily validate an Orthodox education for their children—not unless they themselves really believe in, and live by, the literal Revelation of the sacred writings. Orthodox behavior by parents and teachers who do

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not really believe, no matter how thoroughly it is acted out, is hardly likely to be effective, for children have an unerring sense for the real values of their elders. They will soon discover that they have been put into a make-believe world created solely for their conditioning. Deprived of real spiritual relations with their play-acting parents and teachers, they will end up by resenting the traditionalism so carefully cultivated for their sake.

Nor is it really possible as yet to found the Jewish religious school on new and clear affirmations of faith. It is true that the present condition of the Jew clearly demands a new spiritual impulse. A strong current of some kind of pietism would solve many problems—that of education among them—for it would give content and vision to Jewish life. The very intensity of the need should make one suspicious, however, of a too ready acceptance of any of the budding schools of theological thought; at this stage, they are more a reflection of the presence of religious seeking than a guide on the road toward the faith being sought. To at least one observer, neo-Hasidism seems too laden with nostalgia, neo-Orthodoxy too obviously descended from its Christian counterpart, and Jewish existentialism too alien and individualistic for any of them, alone or in combination, to answer our contemporary quest for a Jewish faith. These new religious movements have as yet hardly made a major impression on the mass of American Jews and, therefore, a widely compelling educational program cannot be founded on them. There is no escape from dealing with our time as it really is. It is an age to which the Word has not yet been spoken, but which, in its deepest soul, is waiting for it.

The contemporary task of Jewish education is at once more modest and more difficult than the cultivation of well-balanced individuals or convinced partisans of one or another doctrine. Its function is to fight a holding action in order *to keep alive the skills and content of tradition so that the fire of illumination will have a Jewish bush on which to flame.* If the school is to be successful in this, it has to do two things: the content of its curriculum must provide an adequate seed-ground for a future religious revival in the grand manner; and this content must be susceptible of being taught, with complete intellectual honesty, out of a wide variety of Jewish conviction.

THE basic tensions of Judaism through the ages have been between Bible and Midrash, between Halachah and Agada, between the *mitzvah* and its rationalizations or philosophic justifications. The more fixed and stable of the two poles has always been the sacred writings and practices as over against the changing and individualistic commentaries with which they have been surrounded.

Let the major content of Jewish education then be the great texts of the tradition beginning with Bible and Talmud. Since we want the young to find their homes in this inheritance, let the emphasis of the school be on a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew of the classic ages. It is quite irrelevant whether the children in the Jewish school ever learn to chat a bit in the argot of Israel (they can acquire that themselves quite easily later on, if they are so minded) provided most can understand the *Chumash* in the original, and some can read the less complicated medieval classics for edification and even pleasure.

It is also not of great importance that the young be taught any considerable amount of Jewish history, the present end-all and be-all of too many curricula. Even to serve the purposes of Jewish apologetics and to generate pride in one's group and ancestry, a collection of names and facts is a questionable tool. The present history textbooks in our religious schools fail dismally to give a notion of the sweep and content of the Jewish experience. This attempt had best be saved, in any case, for the late high school, college, and adult reading of the students; they will by then already have had a first-hand confrontation with the thoughts of our greatest spirits. A page of Hillel in the original must precede by many years the

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nearly exact dates of his career, and at least an attempt at reading Judah Halevi before we face the thirteen-year-old with his strange name in a Sunday school textbook, followed by the rather mystifying explanation that he was a medieval Jewish philosopher and poet.

Along with the classical texts we must also teach the young the manner in which *all* the *mitzvot* are to be observed. Although true, it is no fair counter-argument to maintain that some *mitzvot* have fallen into almost complete disuse, or are incomprehensible, and that most are not practiced at home. There is warrant in the Jewish past for the teaching of even those aspects of the Law that have no practical relevance. Have not the technical details of the service of the Temple been studied by Jews since the Exile? And this was no waste of spiritual energy or a mere exercise in archaeology. Without two millennia of such studies, and the prayers for the restoration of Zion which accompanied them, there would be no Israel today. There are other examples—i.e., the growing importance of the ceremony of the First Fruits—of how customs and practices kept in suspended animation by the activity of the school have now been lately revived.

It does not really matter that the very teaching of such skills in the performance of the *mitzvot* will create problems at home. Parents are not really so set in their disregard of the tradition that anything they themselves do not practice becomes out of question in the Jewish school. Certainly strains will be caused, but what of it? That is the very nature of an age of religious uncertainty and the inescapable burden we must bear. We have not yet enough common convictions to write a Shulhan Aruch for this day, but we at least can give the young all the material out of which they may, in their time perhaps, write one.

The kind of Jewish education envisaged here will certainly face the same problem that all our modern Jewish schools now face: the whys and wherefores that the children confront us with. At this point we must act with an honest and candid intellectual tentativeness. Here, too, there is warrant in the tradition itself. Even the greatest teachers of the classic past often said to their students that they were not sure of their own understanding of aspects of the Bible or Talmud, and they made hesitant suggestions "according to the poverty of their own understanding." By all means let that plurality of convictions obtain that now characterizes American Jewry, but these convictions should not be taught as dogmas to the exclusion of the actual content of tradition. Teachers and parents should give their explanations in terms of "the poverty of their understanding" when explanations are required, but let it be admitted and emphasized on all sides, particularly to the children, that such formulas are personal and subordinate to the texts and experiences themselves. Without making a virtue of spiritual uncertainty, will there not perhaps result from such candor an honest relation between the young and their elders as they join in the deepening of their Jewish knowledge and their search for a personal faith?

Along such a path the Jewish school can again assume its real function—that of speaking in mature accents of mature things. Of what these "mature things" are, we no longer have the clear and strong idea our forefathers had. Instead, we are turned and spun by winds of fashionable doctrine. Under the circumstances, about the best we can do—it is also the least we ought to do—is to sit doggedly by the embers of Jewish teaching, by the opened Bible (in Hebrew!) above all, and prepare ourselves for the miraculous moment when the words enflame our spirit. Then we—adults and children alike—will know what we only can guess at now: what it means to be children of the Fathers and covenanted to God.

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A WHITE LIBERAL TRAPPED BY HIS PREJUDICES

Riot Draws the Lines in Kimberley

DAN JACOBSON

IT IS a curious fact that we have in recent literature introspection on practically everything that people could possibly introspect about. We know why people become Communists, and why they cease to be Communists; we know what it feels like to be the pilot of a jet plane going through the sound barrier, and what it feels like to be a poet in Bloomsbury; obliging schizophrenics have told us what an attack of schizophrenia is like. But I have yet to come across any introspection on race prejudice, though it is something that occupies our minds almost as much as Communism, and rather more than poetry. It is the subject, certainly, of enough reports and analyses. The reason for the gap in our knowledge would appear to be that those who draw up the reports and analyses are without prejudice, or believe themselves to be; and the subjects of the inquiries cannot introspect upon their prejudices—they can merely give vent to them.

Yet the reasons may be somewhat more involved than that, and perhaps some of them will emerge from what I am going to write. I offer myself: I am racially prejudiced, and I don't believe in my prejudices. I would like to get rid of them, though I do not believe that under the present circumstances I can, and I am willing to help in the fight against them within myself and others.

HAVING reached that stage, my evidence is perhaps suspect. I am not *really* prejudiced, the argument might run, and so useless for the purposes of introspection upon race prejudice. That may be. It may very well be. But I sit here writing an article for a nice, enlightened magazine in America, and at the same time I know that if I go into the street and meet an African, I will talk to him differently from the way I would talk to a white man. I am not *really* prejudiced, perhaps: I wouldn't hit him for no reason, as a great many of my white compatriots might if the mood was upon them; I would shake his hand if he offered it; I would even invite him to the house if I were sure that the police and my neighbors would not know about it. But still, as we would draw together in the darkened street, as we would meet under a lamp post, and as I would ask him for a match, say, my words would be different, my very voice would be different to what it would have been had I addressed a white man. Why? And the answer is short and unmistakable. It is because he is an African, to use the enlightened name. Because he is a Native, to use the word which comes more naturally to my lips. Because he is a Kaffir, to use the most common, insulting word of all.

But when I try to find out why I should speak like this to him, I have to admit that I am baffled. I know all the reasons, of course. I am merely responding as I was

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DAN JACOBSON here evokes for us the painful inner distress of the man of good will, brought up among the fires of race hatred, who cannot purge himself entirely of his prejudices, and indeed can find no practical way to take a stand independent of prejudice once violence has drawn the line. This personal document may tell us more than many factual reports of the significance of Premier Malan's resounding victory in the recent South African election. Mr. Jacobson was born in Johannesburg in 1929, attended the University of the Witwatersrand, and is at present in the stock feed business in Kimberley. He has been writing short stories for a number of years—two of his stories will appear in our pages during the coming months—and is now working on a novel.

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taught to respond to people with black skins, at school, at home, in the streets, in jokes, in songs, in films, at dances, in every activity that I have ever undertaken and shared with my fellow white South Africans. I know that. Yet the bafflement persists. Because when I look back, I see that there were hundreds of other things I did in common that no longer have any effect on me. We hated the other boys who went to another school and against whom we played Rugby. I no longer do. We were crazy about American swing. I now find it dull. I was in love with Ingrid Bergman. I no longer am. All the poisoned entertainments and false sentiments about England (known to thousands of people who have never been there as "Home"), all the bad Zionist propaganda, the Jewish nationalism, the enthusiasms about boxing champions, all the things that I see hundreds of thousands of people around me taking part in, leave me quite cold. They bore me. I don't believe in them. Why then do I stick at this thing—this racial prejudice?

Again, there is a large answer. Because it suits me, as a white man, as a member of the ruling group. All right, I grant that. But I am not a white man only, or a member of the ruling group only. I am also me—a reader of COMMENTARY, an admirer of George Orwell, fond of traveling, trying to write a novel, raising ten red fowls in the back yard, quite harmless. Why does this me persist with its prejudices? I don't think that there is a short answer, once the white-man-ruling-class stuff has been set aside, and I believe that, to some extent, it can be set aside.

Nor do I want to mislead myself or others about this, and I don't want to stand here as a figure of complacent race hatred. I am a "liberal" in the precise South African sense of the word, and for want of anything better to take pride in, I am proud that I am a liberal. I want houses, education, votes, and equal treatment for the Africans of this country, all the things that are so obvious one feels stale repeating them. I am prepared to work for these things, if I knew of people with whom I could work; and I am proud when I hear an African read a paper or make a good speech, or when he shakes my hand in friendliness, for then I know that I am right in what I believe, and that all the others who would treat him as a slave, and look upon him as a kind of ape, are wrong.

But the one thing doesn't cancel out the other. It is "liberalism" and myself that are condemned, but the tone of my voice, in the casual encounter, is still different. Why? Because he is black. He is different from me. And why is he different? Because he is black. The argument runs in a circle; it isn't an argument, it's a statement of prejudice.

LET me approach the same thing from another angle. I say that I would like to work for votes, houses, and education for the Africans, if I knew of people with whom I could work. The answer is obvious: work with the Africans. But I don't—and it is not only because of the danger involved, the possibility of arrest and imprisonment for attempting to work with Africans in political action. There are other reasons.

The blur begins to thin out a little, and I realize that I can't work with the Africans because I don't know them. I don't know how they think or what they think. I don't know their feelings, except in a gross sort of way, without subtlety in my guesses. I don't know what they want or whether they want the same things as I do. I feel completely strange to them, alien, though they are the people among whom I grew up, the people who have nursed me, and worked for me, and with whom I spend at least as much time as I do with white men. But I don't *know* them, or feel I don't, and can never know them, because they are black.

The blur dissolves a little and returns. And returns as ignorance. I can see through it a black arm, close-packed curls of hair, a black face, unknown, impenetrable. The skin color is what I am aware of, first and last, when I think of the African people. Black, other to myself. It is extraordinarily

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difficult to pin the feeling down. The man, the African, is surrounded by his blackness; it moves with him wherever he goes, and whatever he does, and wherever it is, there is strangeness, the same unknown quality, until communication between us seems impossible, or possible only from a great distance, a matter of the broadest signals that cannot be misunderstood and that can say very little. For he is black and I am white, and there are differences between us, and I do not know him.

And that blur of ignorance, that failure of the imagination is at the heart of what I can only call my race prejudice. I do not know if it is only a personal failure, or whether the deliberate crippling action taken against me as a child was stronger than I thought it could be, or whether I cling to it because I believe it is in my interests to do so—but I do know that some part of my natural understanding has been extirpated and that ignorance of thought and feeling has taken its place.

But it is impossible to live in a mist, an absence of relationships. I have to place things in some sort of relationship to myself, construct some sort of hierarchy in which I and all the dark-skinned people that I meet can live, I have to give the African a place.

"PLACE"—the word comes appositely enough. For the first of the ten commandments in South Africa reads: every Kaffir must know his place. And what is a Kaffir's place? This image presents itself with warmth, almost with tenderness. His place is considerably below mine. It is a humble, rather poverty-stricken place, and he stands in the middle of it with his hat in his hand, waiting for me to pass, smiling, half bowing. I, then, am kind—if I too am imprisoned in my "place"; these things are double-edged—I give him the cigarette that I am smoking, and I mark that he takes it with cupped hands, for that is a sign of respect among Kaffirs who know their place. And so I pass on, warmed by my generosity, flattered by his gratitude, and soothed by the feeling that things aren't so bad after all. Later, being a liberal, I shall revile myself, but in the meantime it has been very pleasant.

And though it may go against the grain, I have to admit that that paternalism, that feudal kind of attitude, is the only one with which it is possible for me to live among the Africans that I come into contact with. For I very rarely meet the doctors, lawyers, teachers, the politicians among them. I meet only the "boys" (another interesting word—"boy") who work in the same factory as I do, and above whom I am in a position of authority. And the authority and the paternalism, the superiority, becomes automatic, unquestioned by themselves and by myself, and we have some kind of relationship. And the pattern of the relationship spreads itself, insinuates itself into every action of mine, every contact that I have with the Africans, casual or more permanent, as the case may be. I feel no sense of strain about it, as long as the African sticks to his place: my relationships are prejudiced, follow their unfree pattern without tension or hysteria or discomfort. I am prejudiced as my eyes are brown or my hair straight, my skin white, without thought.

It is a fake, though. Being prejudiced as I am may be automatic, everyday, but it works only as long as the Kaffir stays in his place. But if he doesn't—what then? Well, then—again if I am at that moment trapped in my everyday waking dream—I suppose I begin to hector, or I become effusively "liberal," or something unpleasant like that. I no longer know where I am, and I no longer know what I am. I grope insecurely, lost.

But this is a curious thing. For if I am happy only when the object of my prejudice does what the prejudice demands he should do in terms of the prejudice, what about those whose prejudices take more violent forms than my own—the Gentile who sees every Jew as a threat to his way of life, a baby killer? What about every white South African who sees every black South African as a savage, a raper, an incendiary? Are they happy only when the Jew robs them, when the African rapes their wives?

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It sounds grotesque. But living in this country, one cannot escape the feeling that the whites here are not merely misguided, frightened, and vicious. One mustn't underestimate them. The will of the Nazi Gauleiter, the lyncher of Negroes, the white South African may be diseased, but it is powerful, and no one can escape from what he himself has willed into existence.

II

THE two weekends before the Saturday of the riots had been troubled ones. Stones had been thrown at the police who patrol the African locations,* stones had been thrown at the buses serving the locations, notices had gone up outside the municipal beer halls in the locations calling on all Africans to boycott the beer halls.

Yet for all this, no one was expecting serious trouble. Stones are continually being thrown at the police by Africans, and the municipal ban on home-brewing of beer had been a long-standing grievance among the inhabitants of the Kimberley locations. True, there had been a new element in the preliminary troubles. The stone-throwers had shouted "*Afrika!*" when they had attacked the white man's police and the white man's buses—and "*Afrika!*" was part of the simple, effective slogan of the passive resistance campaign organized by the African and Indian Congresses in their struggle against unjust laws and *apartheid* regulations, for the sake of which 6,000 Africans and Indians had gone peacefully to jail in practically every town of importance in South Africa, including Kimberley. But if a drunkard shouts a political slogan, it is his drunkenness that is noted; if an African shouts a political slogan, memory is quick to remind that he is only a Kaffir.

We did not hear that there was a serious riot going on in No. 2 location until after we had heard the ambulance sirens down Main Road and the alarm bells of the fire brigade, that Saturday afternoon, a peaceful afternoon in our part of the town, with the summer sun shining on all the gardens kept trim by so many African servants. Then my brother came in: he had heard that the police had opened fire against rioting Africans. We heard the ambulances again, and as the warm evening drew on, and the sunlight failed, the air of the town in which I have lived all my life, and which, even now, I can think of only as a place of peace and heat and sand on the edge of the desert to the south and west, was wild with the sound of sirens. And my sister ran into the house to tell us how lorry-loads of police had just been seen going down Central Road towards Green Point location. Central Road is the street I live in. But the police had all been armed with rifles and Sten guns, and as they passed my sister, they had waved and smiled and given the thumbs-up sign, and called to her, like soldiers anywhere in the world, calling to their own people, sure of their welcome, sure that the young girl will smile and wave back at them.

We had some sort of supper. Then it was night. The darkness was turbulent. We knew that the serious rioting was in No. 2 location, which is right at the other end of town, but why then was there so much noise in our part of town? We heard shouts, distantly, and all the time the wailing of the sirens. We went into the street, into Central Road, and outside it was worse. The noises came from all sides. Our neighbors too were in the streets, standing at the gates to their gardens, listening, standing in little groups of whites on the pavements, talking to one another. We went back into the house and sat around and stared at one another. I phoned up the offices of the local newspaper, and managed to get through after some time.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"I don't know," the voice at the other end said. "There's a bit of a do with the Wogs at No. 2 location."

"What sort of a do?"

*A "location" is a township outside any white town in which all Africans who work in the town have to live. One must add that they are usually the most hideous, disease-stricken slums imaginable, and that those in Kimberley are no exception.

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The man was as cheerful as anyone could be. He chirped the news over to me. "They've burned down the beer hall and the municipal offices, and a whole lot else. We don't know yet for certain." Then he said: "The latest score is eighteen, I believe."

"What score? Score of what?"

"Dead Kaffirs." I could see his grin. "The police are shooting them like hell."

"What a mess," I said.

"Well, it's a bit of excitement," the other said more warmly. "But they're teaching them this time."

I WENT back and told the others what the newspaper offices had told me. We sat on. Then we heard two bursts of fire from a Sten gun, nearer to hand than anything that had yet happened. We had been hearing shots all the late afternoon and evening, but from a distance. This sounded more serious. We all went into the street again, and this time we were really frightened. For there is a police station at the bottom of the road, about half a mile from our house. It was too dark and confused to make anything out clearly: all we could see was a blaze of lights around the station. It was then that I feared the most. I was sure that the Africans were storming the police station, and how long would it be before they would be coming up Central Road, coming for us? There were a few more volleys of shots, all with the urgent guttural sound of automatic fire. And then we heard someone screaming, screaming, screaming, one voice over and over again, as a child screams. That was lost in a confused shouting of many voices, and then we heard a voice calling: *"Mayibuye, mayibuye!"* The word was said twice, clearer than the other shouting and the shots and the long wail of the ambulance dying away to a mutter. And *"Mayibuye!"* is the other half of the slogan in the campaign of peaceful, non-violent defiance of unjust laws. Together the words *"Mayibuye Afrika!"* mean "Come back Africa!" Come back Africa to the people to whom the continent belongs, the black people who work for us, and are kicked by us, and thrown into jail by us, and whom we do not allow to enter our schools and our theaters, our playgrounds, our buses, our homes. Come back Africa to your people. We who have white skins have lost you.

We knew that we were lost all that night as the sound of the fighting died down, and silence resumed. We knew that we were lost when we stood with our white neighbors, our sharp physical fear of death guttering away from us, and agreed with them that all the police could do was shoot the Kaffirs down. We knew that we were lost when we agreed with Mr. Collins from across the road that the government should give every white man a revolver. And most terribly and desolatingly of all we knew that we were lost when we wandered into the back yard of the house, and saw our two servants standing there. Ben and Betty have been with us for years, and we thought we knew them so well, and they knew us, and that there was friendship between us. But that night Betty stood at the door of her room, in the darkness, and Ben stood leaning over the wall of the back *stoep* on the other side of the yard, and I and my brother and my sister walked between them, past them, knowing that they were looking at us, all the long way to the kitchen door, and I could not say one word to them, not one word, and nor could my brother or sister, none of us could bring out a sound to the two dark people who stood unmoving in the shadow of our home, silent. They let us pass in silence to the door of our house, and we opened it and closed it behind us, to get away from their dreadful rigid silence.

And that was how the riot, one savage and hopeless rising against the authority of the white ruling race, touched me, a member of that race. Now when peace and heat have returned to Kimberley, it seems like a bad dream. And most dreamlike of all, and yet most true to our white way of life, our white way of guilt, was the immediate and overpowering fear of death by violence at the hands of a black mob. For the white police

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are stronger than any dark mob, and can easily stop a riot, or at least confine it to the African locations, leaving our wide, white areas quite safe. And even those shouts and shots near to hand were not, as we feared, a mob storming the police station, but only the police bringing their prisoners to Beaconsfield police station, the jail and other police stations being full. That was all it was. And we were safe that night, within our areas, as I am this night, or any other night of peace in this country. For my side have the guns. On the night of the riot those guns killed or seriously wounded over one hundred Africans.

MY SIDE. And hopelessly, I realize again that it is my side. There is a fatal logic about these things. So many whites have been oppressing so many blacks for so long that there are two sides only now, and we fall into them, willy-nilly. I am white. If the police had not been effective, and if the African mob had managed to break out of the location, I would have suffered at their hands like any other white man. I was as dependent as the most fanatical white African-hater on the Sten guns and rifles of the white police. For the Africans could not have distinguished between us; and in all humility I have to ask—why should they have distinguished? And there is no answer.

I know that it can be asked of me why I do not join the Africans in their liberatory struggle. I can plead what I believe to be the truth: that it is now too late: a skirmish in the liberatory struggle was fought recently at No. 2 location, and if I had not merely trembled at home but gone out to take part in it on the side of the Africans, with luck the police would have seen me as I approached the location and led me home as a madman who has to be protected from himself, and without luck the Africans would have got hold of me, and even though I shouted "*Afrika!*" with all the strength of my lungs they would have battered me to death or burned me to death as they have done to Europeans unfortunate enough to have been caught in African locations at the time of similar riots in the cities of Port Elizabeth and East London.

And then I can only add that I cannot join the liberatory struggle because I am an ordinary sort of person, rather feeble, prejudiced, not knowing the Africans, who wants to go on doing the sort of work that he likes and is best at. But one learns how undemanding frenzy and hatred are of their allies: it is strange to see one's desire to do the job of work that one likes and is best at, one's little prejudices, one's failures of imagination, returning, arm in arm with those who have guns in their hands and blood on their breasts.

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HAS TITO'S REGIME GONE DEMOCRATIC?

A First-hand Observer Appraises the Changes

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

EVERY day thousands of Belgrade's citizens file through the offices of the United States Information Service to get copies of the Serbo-Croat edition of its news bulletins. The only patrons of the more impressive House of Soviet Culture are the satellite diplomats, foregathering there to see the latest movies from Moscow. Rumor has it that this decline from its previous bustling activity has something to do with the presence in a building across the street of Yugoslav secret police. But even without that deterrent, the demand for Soviet "culture" in Belgrade would not be very great. For the one most obvious thing about Yugoslavia today is the general conviction that Yugoslavia is well rid of her one-time Moscow friends.

FOR many Yugoslav Communists the break with Moscow did not come easily. The extent to which they had identified themselves with the international Communist movement was clearly indicated by the selection of Belgrade as the Cominform's first headquarters. Even when the rupture between Stalin and Tito came out into the open in 1948, the Yugoslavs loudly protested their devotion to the Cominform, and complained that they were being unjustly cast out.* But Tito and his advisers soon found that the break, forced upon them by Soviet intransigence, was immensely popular in the country, where resentment against Russian domination and exploitation had been gathering for some time.

At first the Yugoslav leaders tried to restrict their conflict with Stalin to the smallest possible compass: they emphasized that it would produce no change in their domestic policies, and they even tried to hold on to the same foreign policy as before.

It soon became clear, however, that there was no place in the Soviet orbit for heretics—and that a heretical Yugoslavia needed friends. Still fearing and distrusting the West, Yugoslavia nevertheless put out feelers in that direction. Reciprocating Yugoslav distrust, but recognizing the tremendous change in European power relations that Yugoslavia's shift had created, the Western powers also sought a rapprochement. The public seal was set on the new alignment, nonetheless real and irrevocable for its informality and reservations, when in October 1949 Yugoslavia, supported by the West, was elected to the United Nations Security Council over Soviet opposition.

From this point on, things developed rapidly. What had been a furtive flirtation became an open betrothal. To be sure, both sides continued to emphasize that the marriage was one not of love but of convenience.

ONLY a few short years ago (in 1946, to be exact) Tito was shooting down American planes and outshouting all the Soviet satellites in his denunciation of "Anglo-American imperialism." Then came the break with Stalin in 1948 and Yugoslavia's running jump over the Iron Curtain. Today Tito is the recipient of American aid, pays state visits to Great Britain, and denounces not Washington but the Kremlin. To match this about-face in foreign policy, there have been attempts at what seems to be a mitigation of the harshly totalitarian features of Tito's regime. MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM, a seasoned political observer who visited Yugoslavia last December, reports here what specific reforms have been instituted, and offers some appraisal of the changes in the political temper of the regime. Mr. Goldbloom is a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, his most recent appearance being with "Stalin's Trojan Horse Against America" (November 1952). We plan further appraisals of Tito's Yugoslavia, in view of the deep importance of this development in relation to defense and Soviet policy in the cold war.

*Tito ended the Yugoslav Communist party congress that defied the Cominform with the words, "Long live the Soviet Union, long live Stalin!" An interesting account of the events before and after the break is to be found in Vladimir Dedijer's *Tito* (Simon and Schuster, 443 pp., $5.00).

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But the convenience for both parties was very clear. Britain and the United States at once set about improving relations between Yugoslavia and Greece, disrupted by Yugoslav support of the Greek Communist guerrillas. (The withdrawal of this support early in 1949, following the Greek Communists' siding with Stalin against Tito, speedily brought about the collapse of the Greek revolt.) Indeed, Anglo-American intervention in favor of the Center in the Greek cabinet crisis that followed the elections of March 1950 had as one of its aims the setting up of a Greek government with which Tito could deal without having to eat too many of his denunciations of "monarcho-fascist" Greece. It is a measure of the distance both sides have moved since then that the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and Greece, slowly and painfully initiated at that time by the Center government of General Nicholas Plastiras, has now blossomed into a detailed if partly unwritten military alliance. The one fly that still remains in the ointment of Yugoslav relations with the West is Yugoslavia's dispute with Italy over the Trieste area—a dispute that goes back to the Versailles Treaty.

THERE can be no doubt, then, that Yugoslavia is today part of the alliance which stands guard against Soviet aggression in Europe. Nor, from a strictly military point of view, can there be much doubt that the alliance is a valuable and even essential one for the West as well as for Yugoslavia. But, the question then forces itself on us, are we merely making an opportunistic if necessary pact with the less dangerous of two equally totalitarian dictatorships against the more dangerous? This was the original opinion of most Americans, including myself.

Even if this opinion were still warranted, a policy of cooperation with Yugoslavia against Russia would be justified. Of course, it would be neither necessary nor desirable to picture Tito as a knight in shining armor; we are paying heavily today for having fooled ourselves about our Russian ally in the fight against Hitler. But it would be equally foolish, if the Yugoslav regime is now substantially different from the Soviet, for us to pretend that it is not. And, in fact, however alike the two regimes may have been in 1948, they are today very different.

The Yugoslav defection, like most of the splits in the international Communist movement, started over a question of power rather than principle. But such splits have a dynamic of their own. Having parted ways with Moscow, the Yugoslav leaders found themselves necessarily led into a critique of the principles of Soviet practice. It was not enough, for people to whom it was an article of faith that correct action must follow from sound doctrine, to condemn Stalin's acts; they also had to trace these wrong acts back to doctrinal origins.

The leaders of the Yugoslav Communist party were naturally hesitant to revise a faith which they had accepted implicitly and which had provided the basis of their own power. But not to do so would have been to admit that Stalin had to be right and to assent in advance to their own destruction. They had to demonstrate not only to others, but above all to themselves, that their way was not Stalin's. This inner need has been, I think, the strongest motive in the many changes that have taken place in the theory and practice of Yugoslav Communism since the break with Moscow. In this situation, the influence of the West—not through pressure, but simply through contact and example—has tended to pull Yugoslavia away from totalitarianism. So too has the will of the great mass of the people; just as they welcomed the break with Moscow, so they have welcomed the growing flexibility of the regime. And this in turn has encouraged the government to introduce further changes.

ONE of the first things a visitor to Yugoslavia notices is the freedom with which people speak. Usually they speak critically. I spoke to dozens of ordinary, non-party Yugoslavs in trains, in the streets, in stores, and I do not think there was one who did not voice some criticism of the state of affairs. Nor was there one who did not tell me how much better things were today than two years ago.

This does not mean that there is anything like full freedom of speech in Yugoslavia, or that the secret police has disappeared. (Still less that its head, Alexander Rankovich, was strictly accurate when he wrote recently that his organization had won the love of the broad masses!) Many

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political prisoners still sit in jail in Yugoslavia. But there have been no political executions in years, and most of the political arrests in the past two years have been of persons accused, at least nominally, of Stalinist conspiracy or espionage. Yet a few people who have no connection at all with Stalinism are still being arrested for political reasons. When I was in Belgrade I heard of the case of an engineer who had criticized the government freely to some French journalists; he had already spent a few months in jail, and hadn't been brought to trial yet. Subsequently I learned that he had been sentenced to five years in prison on the charge of having given documents to a Russian UNRRA official in 1946!

Pre-war political leaders who were sentenced to prison terms in the first postwar days are being released as their terms expire. Lazar Markovich, for example, a pre-war Minister of Justice and leading member of the conservative Radical party (the dominant party during most of the parliamentary period preceding the dictatorship of King Alexander), was released in 1951. The Serb Agrarian leader Dragoljub Jovanovich, imprisoned after resigning from the first postwar government, remains in prison. Vice-Premier Moshe Pijade told me: "As far as I know our people haven't discussed releasing him at present." But he will undoubtedly be released at the expiration of his sentence in about a year.

THE relative freedom of speech that the man in the street enjoys is of course not to be found in the media of mass communication. It would be absurd to say that the Yugoslav press is today "free" in any meaningful sense. Editors, it is true, have a certain latitude of comment, and controversies take place in the pages of *Borba* and other Yugoslav publications. But all such independence is narrowly circumscribed. Even though there is no pre-censorship, a wise editor refers any "doubtful" matter to "Agitprop" before printing it. When Archbishop Stepinac was made a cardinal, Yugoslav papers printed nothing on the subject for two days—it took that long to receive the official directive on the handling of the matter. My questions about press freedom, as well as about the possibility of opposition parties, led Pijade to tell me: "You suffer from the same sickness all Westerners do; you cannot conceive of any form of democracy but your own."

One partial corrective to Yugoslavia's controlled press—a very inadequate but nonetheless important one—might be the free circulation of foreign publications. Such publications are available today, but in very limited quantities. In Belgrade I was able to find no foreign newspapers on sale; there were, however, a few foreign magazines to be had, including *Time*. In the Croatian capital, Zagreb, and the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana, a few copies of two Austrian newspapers were on sale, as well as one Italian-language paper from Trieste. Individuals may subscribe to foreign publications, and some do. But the total number of copies imported is very small, consisting largely of technical publications. Pijade blamed this on the difficulty of finding foreign exchange for the importation of foreign publications and the high cost of such publications in terms of a Yugoslav income. He himself, he told me, could not afford to renew his subscription to the *Neue Züricher Zeitung*. Yugoslavia *is* short of foreign exchange and one can't afford many foreign publications on an average monthly wage of 7,500 dinars ($25 at the official rate of exchange), or even on the $70 or so earned by top executives. But the foreign exchange situation is no worse in Belgrade than in Zagreb or Ljubljana, and all the German-language newspapers imported into those cities are snapped up in a few hours.

AS THINGS stand, the principal sources of foreign printed matter are the British and American information services. Both publish mimeographed bulletins, in English and Serbo-Croat, summarizing radio news received by the embassies, and both are eagerly sought by thousands of Yugoslavs. The United States Embassy also gives away to key individuals and institutions some hundreds of subscriptions to the Paris *Herald Tribune* and the overseas edition of the New York *Times*. The demand for these considerably exceeds the supply. And both information services have libraries in which more or less current publications are available. In the American Library of Information in Belgrade, the *Times* and Paris *Herald Tribune* are the only newspapers available, each in a

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single copy and seldom less than ten days old. Their datedness may or may not help to explain why nine-tenths of the people I saw in the library were reading such publications as *Harper's Bazaar*.

The Yugoslav radio is even less likely than the press to be caught expressing unofficial opinions in the foreseeable future. In this case, however, it couldn't be otherwise. Yugoslavia's radio stations are heard in neighboring countries and must remain as much an instrument of Yugoslav national policy as the Voice of America is of our own. Still, almost all of the approximately 350,000 radio sets in Yugoslavia are capable of receiving foreign stations, and most Yugoslavs with a radio listen to them.

If the Yugoslav reader is not given much variety of opinion in his newspapers, he does have some in the books he can buy. Most of the stock in Yugoslav bookstores and probably most of the individual titles are translations of foreign works. Some of these are classics, which appear to form a somewhat higher percentage of the reading matter on display in Yugoslav bookstores than in those of New York. But contemporary Western works are well represented, and the selection is varied both in literary and ideological terms. Not only are novels—ranging from Silone and Faulkner to *Gone with the Wind*—available to the Yugoslav reader, but also political and philosophical books by such authors as Sartre and Camus can be had in Serbo-Croat translations.

Obviously, this variety of intellectual fare offered to the Yugoslav citizen must to some extent reflect the policy of the government. Whatever the technical organization of the publishing industry, a central government intent on enforcing strict orthodoxy would see to it that its wishes were observed. But granted a willingness on the part of the Yugoslav leaders to permit some controversial opinions to be expressed in print, the practical realization of this is made much easier by the fact that there are numerous publishing firms, formally autonomous, and actually subject to local rather than central political supervision.

POLITICAL decentralization and economic self-administration are the twin pillars of Yugoslav political theory today. Both policies are directed against the growth of a centralized bureaucracy, in which Yugoslav leaders see the basic cause of all the Soviet Union's faults. At least formally, political decentralization has gone more slowly than economic self-administration. Yugoslav writers tend to be so effusive about the advantages of decentralization that they seem to have already been secured. But most of the measures of decentralization are in fact too recent to have had any significant effect as yet. Prime Minister Vladimir Bakarich of Croatia, himself one of the most active advocates of the new policy, told me that decentralization had so far had little practical effect, although he believes its potential importance is very great. Bakarich, however, may find it politic to underestimate the actual differences which have already developed between Serbia and Croatia in the application of nominally identical policies. My own observations and those of others, both Yugoslavs and informed foreigners, indicate that Croatia under Bakarich has in a number of fields gone considerably further in liberalization than have the other constituent republics of Yugoslavia. Thus, private enterprise theoretically doesn't exist in Yugoslavia except for self-employed artisans selling their own services or products, and producers' cooperatives. In fact, however, the regulations governing this matter are interpreted much more liberally in Croatia than in the other republics, with the result that certain types of private business which are non-existent elsewhere in the country can be found in Croatia.

Or consider the matter of the uneconomic collective farms. (That is, collectives where the land is such that there is no significant gain in efficiency to be got from the mechanization which large-scale farming makes possible.) These have been allowed, as a matter of policy, to dissolve in all parts of Yugoslavia.* The administrative application of this policy, however, was affected by the differing outlooks of the leaders in the vari-

*Only 24 per cent of Yugoslavia's agricultural land was included in collectives at the height of the collectivization drive. By December 1952 this had fallen to 19 per cent, and the government has now announced that collectivization will henceforth be on a purely voluntary basis. In addition most collectives now pay their members partly on a basis of the land and livestock they contributed to the common stock.

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ous republics—with Bakarich again reportedly going furthest in the direction of liberalization. Apparently administrative decentralization had already led to regional differences in practice even at a time when policy was still supposed to be uniform. Now, however, the new constitution, by placing most of the authority over domestic political affairs in the hands of the constituent republics rather than the central government, allows policy differences as well.

There are real differences of background and interest among the various parts of the country—indeed, very great ones—and these are reflected within the Yugoslav Communist movement itself. Pre-war Yugoslavia was never, in fact, a truly unified state. Its nucleus, the Kingdom of Serbia, was under Turkish rule until the early 19th century. Montenegro preserved its mountain independence in virtual isolation, from the Middle Ages down to 1918. Macedonia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina were ruled by the Turks down into our own century, lagging far behind Serbia culturally and economically. On the other hand, the parts of Yugoslavia that had belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire—Croatia and Slovenia, Dalmatia and the Voivodina—were the richest and most advanced of all. There, average income was far greater than in poorer areas.

These differences kept Yugoslavia from becoming a united country in the period between the wars. The resistance of Croatia to Serb hegemony is well known; but Croatia was not the only area of discontent. I remember how, at an institute held by the British Council in Maribor in the summer of 1939, one of the instructors introduced a couple of students as coming from South Serbia, and they protested vehemently, "We are *not* from Serbia, we are from Macedonia!" Tito's government, like the pre-war governments of Yugoslavia, has been faced with the problem of welding peoples on widely varying economic levels and with diverse histories and cultural characteristics into a single nation—the problem, as a leading Yugoslav Communist said to me, "of making one nation out of Austrians and Turks." (He added: "It can be done only by industrialization and the socialist idea.")

In order to make real unification possible, the Yugoslav government is trying to raise the economic and cultural level of the more backward parts of the country. It has established new industries in such areas as Macedonia and Montenegro, when a greater total production would have been gained by making the investments in Slovenia or Croatia. Under rationing, the same standards were set for all parts of the country regardless of previous consumption levels, with the result that the average person in the poorer areas gets more to eat than before. But the improvement of the standard of living in the poorer parts of the country has necessarily been at the expense of the richer sections; these have had to decrease their consumption not only to make up for the increases elsewhere, but also to supply the capital for the country's program of industrial development. This has naturally not increased the popularity of the regime in such areas as Croatia, Slovenia, and Voivodina. Nevertheless, there is no disagreement among Yugoslav leaders as to the necessity of continuing this subsidization; it is the only possible way to create genuine national unity in the long run. But there appears to be considerable disagreement over its pace, with Croatian and Slovenian leaders on one side of the argument, and those from the backward areas on the other.

Linked up with this, also, is the problem of the rate of industrial development. For to divert productive capacity from capital goods to consumer goods would make it possible to raise the standard of living of the poorer areas without depressing those of the wealthier ones. Such a shift is actually scheduled to take place in the current year. (When I asked three leading Yugoslav Communists whether a shift to consumer goods was in prospect, all answered in the affirmative, but their explanations differed. Moshe Pijade said: "We can do this now because our basic industrial program is practically completed." Croatian Premier Bakarich said there had been, in the past, a tendency to overemphasize heavy industry as a result of mistakenly copying the Russians. And a member of the Slovene Communist executive committee declared: "We can do this now because we are part of the Western democratic front, and therefore do not need to rely on ourselves so exclusively for these things." All three explanations have a con-

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siderable measure of truth in them; the latter two are, I think, more important than Pijade's.) The influence of Croatian and Slovenian leaders in the Yugoslav government appears to be increasing; one of its results is likely to be a decrease in the exploitation of these areas for the benefit of their neighbors in southern and eastern Yugoslavia. Of course, increased military demands or an economic breakdown could undermine the standard of living and cause serious political repercussions. But the current year's military budget shows a reduction, attributed to increased efficiency rather than decreased strength; it is also due, at least in part, to the dissolution of the military arm of the secret police.

AT THE same time that Yugoslavia has been moving toward the decentralization of political power, she has been experimenting with economic self-administration and a free market. In theory, all business and industry (with the exceptions previously mentioned) are owned by the state. But each enterprise is administered by the workers in it, through their workers' council, and competes freely on the market. If it makes a profit, this is available for the workers' use, whether for wage increases or for such social purposes as workers' housing. Workers in an efficient enterprise can enjoy the benefits of its efficiency; an inefficient one, on the other hand, will lose money, be forced to reduce expenses by cutting wages, laying off workers, or otherwise retrenching, and in case of continued losses go bankrupt.

Central coordination is effected through control of credit, since no enterprise possesses any capital of its own. All operate exclusively with funds supplied by the National Bank. This is today the only bank in Yugoslavia, but Bakarich told me he thought additional banks should be established. Each firm contributes a percentage of all the wages it pays out to an "accumulation fund" that goes to the central government. The accumulation fund represents rent, taxes, and return on capital investment; from another point of view, it represents the total charges on the enterprise for all purposes other than direct labor and raw material costs. The accumulation rate is set for each individual enterprise by the National Bank. The average for all industry is about 450 per cent; that is, for every dollar paid out in wages, $4.50 goes into the accumulation fund. Its control of credit permits the National Bank to determine which enterprises should expand, and in a general way how the resources of the country should be used.* By varying the accumulation rate, it is able to recapture for the state the benefits of higher production resulting from technologically superior plants, and of higher profits resulting from the monopolistic position of particular enterprises. At the same time, a plant can, by increasing its efficiency, increase the amount it has available for distribution to its workers—though the state receives a major share of the benefit, since as wages rise, so does the accumulation fund.

This is the theory of Yugoslav economic decentralization. In a large measure it corresponds to the facts, but it also has a quality of make-believe in many respects. The free market has meaning in terms of goods sold to the ordinary consumer—the same pound of margarine varies from 60 to 70 dinars in different Belgrade stores, and numerous devices of American merchandising, such as the clearance sale and the loss-leader, have been finding their way into Yugoslavia. Consumer choice among different articles is real, and the demand that an enterprise show a profit or go out of business is an effective instrument for eliminating economic waste. But Yugoslav heavy industry sells either directly to the government, or to other industries; neither in its purchase of raw materials, nor in its sale of its own products, is it dealing in a really free market. The value of its plant as expressed in Yugoslav currency is meaningless; the investment was made in it not only at times when the currency had different values, but also when prices were almost entirely artificially rigged. The pricing of its products must therefore remain arbitrary; it is doubtful if even the best system of cost-account-

*Yugoslavia has operated, up to now, on the basis of general plans laid down in advance for the entire economy. In practice, however, there has been an increasing flexibility in the execution of these plans, and Jack Raymond reports in the New York *Times* of February 18, 1953, that Svetozar Vukmanovich-Tempo, one of the top Yugoslav leaders, "disclosed that in the future Yugoslavia would not indulge in any rigid plans of economic development such as the five-year plan."

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ing—which is no more developed in Yugoslavia than it is in most European countries—would make it possible at this point to determine real costs for heavy industry.

LIKEWISE, the rate of accumulation is arbitrarily set for each individual enterprise by the National Bank. Varying this rate enables the economic authority to equalize the differences in plant efficiency arising from differences in the quality of the equipment; it is also a useful device for regulating the amount of "profit" an enterprise can make, so as to prevent workers in a plant producing scarce goods, or having a monopoly position, from exploiting their advantage at the public's cost. A low rate of accumulation can be used to subsidize a plant producing essential but relatively unprofitable goods, or perhaps help an industry established in a backward area to compete in the market with plants in more advanced parts of the country. But all these functions (like our own system of tariffs, subsidies, and tax concessions) are obviously incompatible with a genuinely free market.*

The general level of accumulation rates and the general level of prices are such as to exaggerate the relative importance of industrial goods in the Yugoslav national product and the relative contribution of industry to the national budget. The fact that in most cases the prices of industrial goods are well above world levels, whereas those of agricultural products are low by comparison with world prices, is not merely a reflection of greater agricultural efficiency. (The best Yugoslav plants are, in terms of man-hours per comparable unit of product, about three-fourths as efficient as the best German plants—which means that they are more efficient than most plants in Western Europe.) Rather, the disproportion is an instrument of national policy, not so much in the economic as in the political field, for the higher nominal value of industry's contribution to the national income and national budget is an important factor in both internal and external propaganda. Moreover, the overvaluing of industrial products guarantees that the "Producers' Chamber" established under the new constitution, representation in which is to be based on the value of the product, will have a majority of industrial workers, although Yugoslavia is still a predominantly agricultural country.

DESPITE these marked limitations, economic decentralization in Yugoslavia has real meaning, and very considerable practical advantages. Articles for which there is a great demand are manufactured in preference to those which people are quite willing to do without, because satisfying the consumer is the way to increase the income of an enterprise. Competition tends to prevent the management and workers of a particular plant from holding up the general consumer; in the long run—and sometimes even in the short run—it brings down prices. (Indeed, Yugoslav officials have expressed fear that state-owned but autonomous enterprises may form cartels, and are studying ways to prevent this!)

Workers have a very real share in the management of the enterprises in which they work. We need not be surprised that in practice this is usually confined to modifying proposals originating with the management; but the workers can, and sometimes do, take the initiative. And the proposals made by management must inevitably be influenced by the knowledge that they will have to win the approval of the workers.

When there is a surplus—as there frequently is—in the wage fund, the workers themselves decide what to do with it. At a meeting I attended of the management committee of a shoe factory in Ljubljana, the workers' council delegates and factory officials making up the committee voted to use the plant's surplus to give a pair of shoes to every member of the family of every worker in the factory, and to pay all workers an extra month's wages. I was also informed that when there had been a temporary layoff because of raw material shortages, the surplus in the wage fund had been used to pay the idle workers their regular wages.

The workers in a plant also determine the division of the wage fund among the various categories of workers, i.e., the wage

*The government announced at the beginning of April that it planned to abolish the accumulation fund technique and replace it with a system of progressive income taxes, applied to profits rather than to gross income. Details of the new system are not yet available, but it will apparently represent a further step in the relaxation of central controls.

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rates for the different occupations in the plant. This division must be approved by the trade union center of the area; in case of disagreement between the workers in the plant and the unions, it goes to arbitration. A trade union official told me that the trade unions had to fight against the tendency of the workers' councils to give too large a share of the wage fund to those in managerial and high clerical positions. But the actual difference between the 6,000 dinars a month received by an unskilled worker and the 22,000 received by the director of the largest factory in Yugoslavia is not very great—particularly when one takes into account the fact that each worker, whatever his base pay, receives 3,000 dinars a month extra for each child he has. The difference between this and the highly centralized system of the Soviet Union is obvious.

THE crucial issue in the question of the political future of Yugoslavia is that of the one-party state. There are as yet no public voices in Yugoslavia to suggest that opposition parties be permitted. The official Yugoslav goal is the replacement of the one-party state by a partyless socialism. Edvard Kardelj, one of the principal architects of present Yugoslav internal policy, writes:

> Any honest man knows today that any party created here outside the People's Front would, regardless of its formal program, inescapably become the rallying point of all kinds of human scum, which would very soon turn such a party into an instrument in alien hands for combating the independence of our country. . . . The future free Socialist society will certainly require neither a state machine nor parties—either one or many, at least not in the sense in which we refer to them today. Now when we have such complex and difficult immediate problems to solve, when the enemy is trying to strangle us by fierce aggressive pressure, it is not our business to dream about the forms the struggle of ideas will take in such future free society. This is a task for future generations. But one task in this respect rests with us; that is, that with the state system we are building we should not impede but *assist* development in that direction. *In that respect the alternative between the Marxist premise [of] the withering away of the state—and with it of every party system—and the Stalinist theory [of] the strengthening of the state today constitutes the touchstone of true socialism.*

The official Yugoslav contention is that the measures of decentralization and functional autonomy which are being introduced mark a beginning in the "withering away of the state." In theory, too, the Communist party is also beginning to "wither away" as it ceases to direct and control. The decisions of the party congress in November 1952 to transfer many of the party's functions to the People's Front (to which almost all adult Yugoslavs belong) and to change the party's name to "Union of Communists" conform to this policy. In practice, it is rather difficult to tell whether the party's essential grip on the state is relaxing. The same people are, on the whole, state officials and party leaders. The recent party congress was the occasion of major policy declarations, some of which involved a diminution of the party's role; policy decisions of equal moment have been taken in the Yugoslav parliament. The fact is that in both cases these decisions were the result of discussion and argument among the same group of people who run both government and party, and reflect tendencies working inside and outside the party. It is interesting to note that Yugoslav leaders have been emphasizing that the People's Front, now renamed "Union of Socialists," should be a place where policies are actually discussed and decisions taken. In line with this, they have stated that it is not undesirable for Communists to disagree in public.

When I asked Bakarich whether decentralization could really be operative, since the Communist party remained centralized, he replied: "The party has no right to interfere in questions of local policy." What would happen, I continued, if Cominformists were to get control of the party and government in one of the constituent republics? "It would be up to the party in that republic to deal with the situation; the central government and party leadership could not interfere."

IT IS of course ridiculous to believe that this would actually happen; the Yugoslav leaders are the last people in the world to indulge in such quixotism. Yet there is no question that the party has been dissolving the functional units by which it exercised control in factories, trade unions, etc. Local elections, works council elections, trade un-

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ion elections are today on a non-party and multi-candidate basis. By law, there must be at least twice as many candidates as there are offices to be filled. Nominations take place at meetings or by petitions requiring only a small number of signatures; lists generally appear to include Communists and non-Communists; there may be two or three competing slates. Voting is by secret ballot and tickets can be split. At the local level it would appear that more non-Communists than Communists are elected. It is interesting to note that in the local elections of December 1952, the results in a number of cases were thrown out and new elections held on the ground that the local authorities had interfered with the secrecy of the ballot. Pijade told me there is nothing to prevent candidates from running in these elections on a program critical of the government's methods; but he made it clear that no candidates would be permitted to raise the question of basic direction.

There have always been officials on all levels, including the cabinets of both the constituent republics and the central government, who had formerly been active in non-Communist parties and had never become Communists. Until recently, however, there was little reason to believe that their presence had any genuine political meaning. But this too may be changing. For in a recent meeting of the Yugoslav parliament, one of the non-Communist members tried to amend a bill amnestying peasants imprisoned for failing to deliver their quotas (compulsory deliveries no longer exist), so as to return their confiscated land, and amnesty political prisoners in general. His amendments, although defeated, were hotly debated. And after their defeat he walked out of the parliament saying that he would vote neither for nor against the bill as it stood.

Yugoslavia still has a long way to go down the road from totalitarianism. Yet the direction of her development since the parting from Stalin has been steadily toward freedom. Moreover, the *values* in terms of which Yugoslav leaders think seem on the whole to be democratic, even where their practice is not. (One trade union leader emphasized to me the "constant struggle" that went on between unions and management; if this was an exaggeration, at least the pretense of disagreement implies a recognition of its desirability.) Every so often there have been statements indicating that the government felt people were taking their new freedom too seriously. But these statements have not been followed by any significant step backward in practice. Communist leaders do not pretend that they have as yet found all the answers: Bakarich repeatedly said, "Yes, I think that's wrong, and it will have to be changed."

But whatever the future may bring, one thing is certain: while still undeniably a dictatorship, Yugoslavia is today one of the few places in the world where people are significantly freer than two years ago.

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PROFESSOR TOYNBEE SURRENDERS THE WEST

Do the Facts Justify This Defeatism?

G. F. HUDSON

SINCE Bertrand Russell in 1948 gave the first Reith Lectures over the BBC under the title "Authority and the Individual," these broadcast lectures have become almost a national institution in Great Britain. They provide a platform for serious exposition of philosophical opinions to a public far wider than could be reached by writing a book, publishing articles in a learned journal, or lecturing in a university.

For this past year, the Reith Lectures were given by Professor Arnold Toynbee on "The World and the West." They have just been published in book form in the United States by Oxford University Press, at a time when the principal nations of the West are deadlocked in a war with Communist China, when the Assembly of the United Nations still has as its chief immediate problem the ending of the war, when the Middle East is in a (mainly anti-British) ferment, and when Africa is torn by new tensions arising from the opposite extremes of Malanism and Mau Mau. Certainly no subject of high discourse could be more relevant to questions of the hour than that of historical relations between the Western and non-Western forms of civilization, and no speaker could be more appropriate than Professor Toynbee, whose monumental work *A Study of History* has been largely devoted to the tracing of such relations. His wide learning and bold speculative mind command the most serious attention for the general view of human history which he has expounded in these lectures. It may be doubted, however, whether his theory is one which adequately explains the phenomena of the contemporary world, and its premises require to be subjected to close critical analysis before it can be taken as a basis for our thinking.

THERE are two possible alternative conceptions of the history of civilization which may be called, respectively, the unilinear and the pluralist. In the former the evolution from Paleolithic to Proto-Atomic Man is regarded as a continuous stream of development common to mankind as a whole and passing everywhere through a series of stages *a b c d*. . . . Sections of mankind lag behind in earlier stages, but if they do so, they must in the long run either "catch up" by hurrying through the stages they have not yet reached, or else be replaced by peoples of more advanced culture. Such a view of world history was naturally associated with the idea of progress as it came to be held by *philosophes* and liberal thinkers during the 18th and 19th centuries. The mid-Victorian Englishman, counting himself "the heir of all the ages in the foremost ranks of time," felt that he stood on a steadily ascending escalator; he might take some interest in his own direct line of past history, but he could hardly be induced to pay serious attention to non-European forms of civilization which he regarded much as a successful businessman might view former rivals who had either gone bankrupt or remained back-street shopkeepers.

The Marxists also belonged to the same way of thinking, in spite of their dire pre-

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dictions of social catastrophe. In contrast to the easygoing optimism of the bourgeois progressives, the Marxists saw an ever sharpening class struggle which would explode in social revolution, but this likewise was an inevitable progress; the workers would necessarily win in the impending conflict, they would make their revolution in the countries that were economically the most advanced, and they would raise mankind to a higher level of productivity and culture. Marx and his followers did not take seriously the possibility either that the conflicts brought about by the contradictions of capitalism might involve the world in a reversion to primitive savagery, or that the proletarian victory might lead to a decline in what the Marxists themselves regarded as the essentials of civilization.

The First World War, however, brought a new sense of the fragility and insecurity of civilized society and called in question the reality of progress. Liberals might hail the new era of Wilsonian self-determination and the League of Nations, Marxists might extol the brave new world created by the Russian Bolsheviks, but there was a widespread feeling, naturally at its strongest in defeated Germany, that the lights had indeed gone out in Europe. The time was ripe for a challenge to the whole philosophy of progress, and the challenge was delivered in Spengler's *Decline of the West*. To the concept of continuous unilinear historical development Spengler opposed a pluralist doctrine; history for him was the record of many distinct civilizations* in various epochs of time and regions of the world, comparable to individual animal organisms, each with its own life cycle of birth, growth, creative prime, old age, and death. Each civilization had an essential quality that was unique, but all were equivalent in their corresponding phases, just as the stages of life of individuals in different generations—childhood, adolescence, and so on—correspond in each case. It followed from this theory that, as each civilization had its own death as well as its own life, there could be no general progress of mankind, except insofar as the accumulated diversity enriched the experience of the contemplative historian standing outside the process as a detached observer.

THE most significant part of Spengler's doctrine was his theory of cultural decline as applied to the West. According to Spengler, the final stage in the life cycle of a civilization is an era of stability, but decreasing vitality, brought about by forcible political unification and institutional uniformity over the whole geographical area covered by the civilization. Having started with *Kleinstaaterei* and the maximum of local diversity and variety, the system only reaches its highest point of unity, order, and stability when its culturally creative period is already over. The prime analogy for this concept is the history of the ancient world which attained its political unity in the Roman Empire only after Hellenism had virtually come to the end of its creative achievement in philosophy, science, and the arts. Spengler inferred that Western civilization (which he considered to have been born in the period of confusion after the break-up of the Roman Empire) had in the 20th century likewise passed the zenith of its creative power and reached the point at which nothing remained for it to do but proceed to the construction of an imperial world-state. It was vain, according to Spengler, for Western man to rebel against this destiny, for it was determined by inexorable laws of history, and an aging civilization could no more renew its youth than an old man could win supremacy in the boxing ring.

The political implications of Spenglerism in the context of post-1918 Germany are only too obvious. Spengler rejected as utopian illusions the ideals of both Wilson and Lenin; at the same time he warned the Germans that there could be no going back to pre-Bismarckian German culture. The lesson to be learned from the national catastrophe

*Spengler distinguishes between a "culture" and a "civilization," reserving the latter term for the final phase of a "culture." But in referring here to Spengler's theory, the more normal English usage is followed.

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was not to renounce Bismarckian blood and iron, but to have more of it; Spengler hailed "the return of the Caesars" and hinted that the Prussians could still be "the Romans of the modern world." His *amor fati* was not merely submission to a repellent necessity, but was mingled with an element of pleasure; it was sad to think that Western civilization could never again produce a Shakespeare or a Beethoven, but there was consolation for a German in the prospect of a German world empire—especially after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Spengler was not a racialist, but his intellectual influence was one of the factors that prepared the way for Hitler.

Historical pluralism, however, made its appeal not only to would-be Caesarian bidders for the salvage of an allegedly degenerate civilization, but also to philosopher-historians who had quite different reasons for believing in its degeneracy. For certain thinkers whose outlook was shaped by a deeply religious temperament, and for whom the inner meaning of a culture lay in its religious faith, the West was in decline and was threatened with catastrophe, not because the democracies had been so unkind as to break the military power of the German Reich, but because for more than two centuries Western civilization had set aside its traditional religious inspiration and developed on secularist lines. As Professor Toynbee puts it in the fourth of his Reith Lectures:

> This great spiritual revolution overtook the Western world towards the close of the 17th century, when a hundred years' trial of waging savage and inconclusive civil wars under the colors of rival religious sects had at last disgusted the Western peoples, not only with wars of religion but with religion itself. The Western world reacted to this disillusioning, self-inflicted experience of the evils of religious fanaticism by withdrawing its treasure from religion and reinvesting it in technology; and it is this utilitarian technological excerpt from the Bible of our Western civilization, with the fanatical religious page torn out, that has run like wildfire round the world. . . .

For anyone who accepts the *Weltanschauung* of Saint Augustine and places the real significance of human life in a "City of God," it is, of course, quite logical to regard Western civilization as having fallen into a decline with the "great spiritual revolution" of the 17th century. In comparison with the fatal defection from religious faith, only secondary importance can be attached, from this point of view, to the advance of science from the time of Descartes, to the vast increase in material productivity and control over natural forces since the first steam engines, to the development of parliamentary government, freedom of speech, and political democracy since 1688, or to the more recent growth of policies of social welfare for extending the benefits of modern knowledge and material well-being from privileged minorities to the masses. It must be emphasized that a man of strong religious conviction is quite entitled to hold the belief that the last two and a half centuries, which have seen changes in human life more profound and far-reaching than any others since the invention of agriculture, have been on balance a regress rather than a progress, and he has two world wars, the gas chambers of the SS, and the murderous farces of Communist state trials to adduce in support of his argument. But it is also clear that anyone who holds such a view cannot be reckoned a wholehearted defender of those Western values which are not directly based on religion; he necessarily sees Western civilization in its present crisis not as a progressve way of life and thought under heavy attack by malign destructive forces, but as a sinful society getting what it deserves.

Professor Toynbee regards Western civilization as fundamentally a creation of the Christian religion, but considers that during the last two and a half centuries it has been "post-Christian." It is during this last period, however, that it has spread over the whole world, either through colonization from Western Europe or through the adoption of Western technology by non-Western peoples. Professor Toynbee contrasts this recent spread of "secularized" Western civilization with the earlier resistance of Eastern countries to the propagation of Christianity, and

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finds in it an illustration of a law of "encounters" between civilizations

> . . . to the effect that a fragment of a culture, split off from the whole and radiated abroad by itself, is likely to meet with less resistance and therefore likely to travel faster and farther than the culture as a whole when this is radiated *en bloc*. Our Western technology, divorced from our Western Christianity, has been accepted not only in China and Japan, but also in Russia and in many other non-Western countries, where it was rejected so long as it was offered as part and parcel of a one and indivisible way of life, including Western Christianity as well.

But what exactly is the relation between Western technology and Christianity? This is not a question of approval or disapproval, but of historical judgment. If Western technology were a sort of emanation of the Christian faith, we should expect to find it developing just as much in Eastern Orthodox as in Western Catholic Europe, and more strongly in medieval than in modern times. In fact, however, its phenomenal growth in association with free scientific thinking has been characteristic of the "post-Christian" period, and before its decisive forward movement in the 17th century its tradition goes back to the revival of classical Greek studies in the Italian Renaissance, with sporadic medieval forerunners, all in contact in one way or another with Greek origins. Modern science and technology indeed belong not to the Christian but to the Hellenic part of the inheritance of Western civilization. The most Christian part of our history was the medieval—the age of Peter the Hermit and Saint Bernard, of the Gothic cathedrals and the Scholastic philosophy of Dante and Aquinas.

But from the period of the Renaissance, Western Europe has developed along different lines, and although retaining a rich legacy from the medieval world, its civilization has been in essentials a renewal and continuation of the Hellenic. This basic fact is obscured in Professor Toynbee's historical scheme, as in Spengler's, by the concept of Western civilization as a unit quite distinct from the Greco-Roman. According to both Spengler and Toynbee, the Hellenic or Greco-Roman civilization completed its life cycle and came to an end before Western civilization was born. There is a relation of the later to the earlier system which Professor Toynbee calls "affiliation," but this does not affect the basic separateness. On this view there is no fundamental break in European history between Charlemagne and the 20th century, but there is a fundamental break somewhere between Augustus and Charlemagne. Moreover, there is a geographical displacement as well as a succession in time. For Professor Toynbee, Western civilization has belonged from the beginning to Northern Europe rather than to the Mediterranean; in one of his books he says that its homeland lies between Winchester and Cologne. This "Gothic" bias represents the opposite pole of historical interpretation from the anti-medievalism of the school of Gibbon; both extremes involve a distortion, but the Gibbonian goes less wide of the mark for an understanding of the antecedents of the modern world.

If it is once admitted that modern science and technology belong not to the Christian but to the Hellenic tradition of our civilization, the problem of the separation of Western technology from Christianity does not arise. But another problem does arise—that of the separation of Western technology from the intellectual freedom and rationality which are the essence of the Hellenic tradition. For the scientific knowledge which through its application to production, transport, communications, and warfare has transformed the material conditions of life all over the world is historically the product of a certain mental attitude—the "methodic doubt" of Descartes, the refusal to accept any proposition merely on authority, whether scriptural, ecclesiastical, or governmental, the claim to subject every doctrine to critical analysis and every hypothesis to the test of observation and experiment. Can, then, the technology which has been the outcome of this freethinking activity be separated from it and become an independent cultural factor developing on its own?

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We may extend the question even further and ask whether Western technology can in the last resort flourish without political liberty also. Historically, Greek freedom of thought was closely linked with the citizen rights of city-republics, and a similar connection is found again in modern European history. It is hardly possible in the long run to combine an unrestricted critical activity of the mind in the field of natural science with an unquestioning acceptance of authority in everything that concerns human society and government. Either the mind in its study of nature is brought under the control of religious or ideological authority, or else the critical spirit invades the realm of politics. The essence of political democracy in fact is not the universal franchise (which can be a mere empty form, as in the "elections" of totalitarian states), but freedom of criticism, extending both to the institutions of society and to the particular policies, acts, and statements of governments. It is true that there have been cases of patronage of free scientific thought by "enlightened despots," and from this it may be inferred that there is no essential incompatibility between intellectual liberty and authoritarian government. But these exceptional conditions have been due, partly to a disjunction, and even conflict, between the spiritual and temporal authorities in society, and partly to unawareness on the part of rulers of the risks incurred in allowing men to think freely. After the French Revolution the defenders of monarchical absolutism were less disposed to tolerate *philosophes*, and Metternich was quite right, from his own point of view, when he said of both religious dogmas and principles of government that "to discuss them is often dangerous and always useless." In our time the ruling parties of totalitarian regimes are fully alive to the anti-despotic tendencies of uncontrolled critical thinking; they combine both ideological and political authority in complete fusion, and they set out to suppress any questioning either of their basic doctrine or of their particular versions of fact.

When he comes to consider whether Western technology can be successfully adopted by non-Western civilizations in detachment from its original context, Professor Toynbee is not entirely consistent. He speaks of "the almost worldwide dissemination of a technological splinter flaked off from our Western civilization since the close of the 17th century." On the other hand, he quotes examples showing that the adoption of Western technology by Eastern peoples has usually been followed by important social and political changes and that rulers who thought they could have a Western-style army and navy without affecting traditional ways of life have often got more than they bargained for. Thus we are told how Mehmed Ali of Egypt engaged European experts to run an arsenal without any idea of undermining Islam, but the Europeans insisted on starting a maternity hospital for their families, and Egyptian women then also began to frequent it, causing a breach in Moslem religious custom. Similarly, Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey did his best to suppress liberal opinions in his realm, but sent young army officers to Western Europe for military training, with the result that they became carriers of the forbidden thoughts. Industrialization brings even greater havoc, and Gandhi, though he became India's national leader, signally failed to persuade his countrymen to retrace their steps to a pre-industrial economy. Western technology has indeed everywhere disrupted the traditional cultures of the East. The question of today is no longer whether they can be preserved intact, but whether their transformation will reflect predominantly Western liberal or Marxist-Leninist influence.

Russian Communism has three great advantages for competing with the West in Asia. In contrast to the Moslem, Hindu, and Confucian traditional cultures it is, as Professor Toynbee calls it, a "Western heresy"; it is of the modern world, mechanized, industrial, even nominally democratic. At the same time it is completely authoritarian, and thus fulfills yearnings for a father-priest-king among peoples accustomed over millennia to religious direction and autocratic monarchy. Finally, by anti-imperialist propaganda

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it can exploit all the jealousies and resentments evoked by the era of Western power ascendancy and expansion. Nevertheless, in view of these advantages which Communism enjoys, what is remarkable in the recent history of Asia is not that Moscow has had so much success, but that it has had so little. Against the Communist victory in China must be set the liberal-democratic developments in Turkey, India, and Japan. Though the danger of a Russo-Chinese conquest of Asia remains, the situation from a Western point of view provides no cause for despair.

But what is of supreme importance in the contest of ideologies is that the liberal West should manifest faith in its own values. Faith in political liberty, in toleration and freedom of thought, in a critical, rational attitude towards life, cannot, of course, have the same quality of fanatical devotion which imbues the adherent of a totalitarian doctrine. Yet there is such a thing as faith in freedom itself which the finest minds of the West in modern times have always felt as having the force of religious belief; it needs again to be proclaimed as a gospel by those who accept it. To repudiate it is to abandon Western civilization—as so many restless spirits seeking short cuts to paradise have in fact done.

The *trahison des clercs* is indeed the fundamental threat to the Western way of life; it has more of danger in it than any menace of mere military conquest. Our very freedom forbids that intellectual desertion should be countered by persecution, but this renders it all the more necessary that it be fought with the weapons of the spirit.

UNFORTUNATELY Professor Toynbee must be counted among the deserters. For him "secularized" Western civilization is past praying for. Dwelling on his favorite theme, he writes:

> We Westerners were gratified when we saw the Japanese and Chinese who had rejected our Western civilization in its religious version, accepting it in a secularized version, in which technology instead of religion had been given the place of honor. . . . But we have lived to see this secular Western dispensation disappoint us in both countries. In Japan it bred a disastrous militarism; in China it bred a disastrous political corruption. . . . In offering the Chinese and Japanese a secularized version of our Western civilization, we have been offering them a stone instead of bread, while the Russians, in offering them Communism as well as technology, have been offering them bread of a sort—gritty, black bread if you like to call it so; but that is still an edible substance that contains in it some grain of nutriment for the spiritual life without which man cannot live.

Professor Toynbee apparently finds food for spiritual life in the fanaticism of Communist belief, even though it is godless, but none at all in Western ideals of a disinterested search for truth, political liberty, and respect for human rights. He does not himself, however, like the "gritty" flavor of Communism, so he seeks his own religion elsewhere. Rather surprisingly, in spite of his nostalgia for the Gothic past, he does not look forward to a revival of Christianity. His hopes are set on the future emergence of a new universal religion, which, by drawing on analogies from ancient history, he suggests is due to arrive shortly.

We might be consoled in our troubles by this prospect if we could feel sure that the new religion would really have a chance to do its work. But if we just sit around waiting for it, mankind may fall under totalitarian rule in the meantime, and it is difficult to see how the new religion could then ever get started. The Caesars of the post-liberal era would certainly not allow an insurgent faith to be propagated by glorious martyrdoms; all that, as George Orwell has explained in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, is now quite out of date. If Nero had had the resources of the MVD at his disposal, the early Christians would have been publicly confessing how in their vileness they had set fire to Rome on the instructions of the King of Parthia. In these days, it seems, a certain minimum of liberty is essential even for the spread of a new religion. So perhaps the unspiritual West can still prepare the way for the future messiah simply by defending such poor principles as it has.

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THE LIFE AND ART OF MODIGLIANI

Behind His Unique Vision

ALFRED WERNER

IN ITALY there exists an odd legal provision concerning the seizure of a debtor's property; whatever else the officers of the law may impound, they cannot touch a bed in which a woman has just given birth to a child, or is about to do so. It was thanks to this that Eugenia Modigliani, wife of a bankrupt businessman, Flaminio Modigliani, enjoyed a modicum of comfort when, on July 12, 1884, she gave birth to their fourth child, Amedeo ("beloved of God"), in Leghorn (Livorno), Italy. The Modigliani family had moved into their shabby apartment only a few days before, having been forced by poverty to leave a more elegant section of the city where they had lived in the same house for over a decade. Mother and child lay underneath a mound of family possessions, piled on the bed in order to be saved from confiscation. Roaming about in the desolate rooms were three other children, Emmanuele, born 1872, Margherita, born in 1874, and Umberto, born in 1878, all of them already old enough to grasp tragedy and understand their parents' grief.

Thus did one of the most remarkable artists of our century enter upon his life. The popular notion still has it that Amedeo Modigliani came of a wealthy family; and further misinterpretation gathered around his figure as spurious anecdotes and absurd legends about his life in Paris were put in circulation, after his death, by persons who claimed to have known him. The time is overdue to separate fact from fiction.

TO UNDERSTAND Modigliani's way of life in Paris it is important to know the real background of his youth. His family was Sephardic, one of the old Jewish families of Italy, where, as in most Latin countries, Jews mixed with the Gentiles around them more generally than did the Ashkenazim in the North, and took on the appearance and behavior of their neighbors to a much greater degree. In Paris, Modigliani was usually considered a typical Italian, whereas Chagall and Soutine were regarded not as Russian or Lithuanian, but as Jews. All who met him were struck by his aristocratic bearing even amid misery and neglect, and this contributed further to the legend of his "wealthy" family.

The name Modigliani is not uncommon in Italy. It is thought to be derived from Modigliana, the name of a town near Forlì, less than a hundred miles south of Venice. Two Gentile artists, Livio and Gianfranco Modigliani, father and son, lived in this vicinity around 1600 and painted frescoes at Forlì and other places. In recent times, however, the name has belonged exclusively to Jews (in many European countries surnames taken from urban places are usually Jewish). Other outstanding Italian Jews who bear, or bore, the name are Ettore Modigliani, an art critic, Elio Modigliani, an ethnologist,

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THE mixture of fact and fancy that makes up the standard biography of Amedeo Modigliani, the Italian Jewish painter and sculptor who was one of the shining lights of the school of Paris in its halcyon days and whose reputation today looks greater than ever, here receives a thorough sifting. The results, even as summed up in the space of an article, should compel a salutary revision of our conception of this extraordinary figure. ALFRED WERNER, a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, was born and educated in Vienna, earning his doctorate in literature shortly before the coming of Hitler—which latter event brought Mr. Werner six months of confinement in Dachau. Settled in this country since 1939, he has made himself well known as a free-lancer, and his writings on politics and literature and art have appeared in a score of American magazines.

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and Enrico Modigliani, a pediatrician, none of whom, however, is directly related to the artist's family. We do not know whether the latter's forebears actually came from Modigliana, but it is quite possible, since Jewish communities can be traced in the neighborhood of Forlì as far back as the 14th century and even earlier.

Amedeo's paternal ancestors were well off, though far less so than they have been made to appear in the various biographies of the artist. In the 19th century, far from being the "wealthy owners of zinc mines and of forests, exploiters for charcoal in northern Italy and Sardinia," they merely held shares in zinc mines. Modigliani's father's father was a native of Rome, the one Italian city with a tradition of discrimination (Vatican-enforced) against Jews. But as bankers to the Pope the Modiglianis enjoyed a certain privileged status. Even so, when the Italian patriots of the Risorgimento, led by Mazzini and Garibaldi, established a democratic republic in Rome in 1848, the Modiglianis, along with most other Jews there, flocked to their support. But the republic was soon overthrown by Napoleon III's French Zouaves, sent to aid the Pope, and most of the Jewish republicans of Rome followed Garibaldi's troops in their retreat northwards.

Shortly before the end of 1849 the Modiglianis came to rest in Leghorn, in Tuscany, where Jews had for long enjoyed a relatively good status. Though still deprived of the political rights they had known for a brief space under Napoleon I, they at least "continued to enjoy their civil rights; special taxation was not reintroduced, they were still admitted to the universities, and the ghetto system was not renewed. . . . Leghorn Jewry retained, indeed, its privileged status, and in the course of the following generation was to maintain its highest level of numbers and prosperity. . . . a foreigner admitted to the community still became naturalized automatically" (Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy*).

AMEDEO'S father, Flaminio Modigliani, born in Rome in 1840, was still a child when he arrived in Leghorn. It was on a trip to Marseilles, in France, that he met his future wife, Eugenia Garsin. She, of Italian Jewish origin, had been born in Marseilles in 1855 and saw Italy for the first time when she went there to be married, around the year 1870. Her family was to play a greater role than her husband's in Amedeo's life. Her father, Isacco ("Giacci") Garsin, born in Leghorn in 1819, had been taken to Marseilles when his whole family moved there in 1838, and there he himself went into the export-import business, married, and raised his children. If too temperamental ever to be a great success as a merchant, he was at least a fascinating character, had traveled a great deal, knew many languages, and was interested in everything from rabbinical lore to the fine arts.

The Garsins claimed that their name was derived from the Hebrew *gars,* an abbreviation of *geri Sinai,* or "dweller of Sinai," but it is more likely to have come from the very common name of Gershom. It is, however, an established fact that the Garsin family was connected with Spinoza through one of his sisters. As a child, the precocious Amedeo (named after his mother's favorite brother) was called "the little philosopher," and as an adult he loved to indulge in philosophical discussions, often proudly recalling the fact of his blood relationship with the author of the *Ethics* (he said once to Louis Latourrettes, *"J'adore la philosophie. Je l'ai dans le sang"*).

THOSE graphic evocations of Jewish community life that are so conspicuous in Chagall's canvases are entirely absent from Modigliani's; he never knew segregation like that of the *shtetl,* or the kind of self-destructive bitterness that Chaim Soutine carried with him from Lithuania to Paris. Soutine grew up in direst poverty, in a small town where he suffered as a boy from his orthodox neighbors' hostility to the arts. The case of Modigliani, who became Soutine's closest friend in Paris, is quite different. Like Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks family, the Modiglianis, as they lost their skill in busi-

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ness, gained in aesthetic sensibility and in morbidness. Unlike his ancestors, Amedeo did not know how to make money, but only how to spend it recklessly.

Modigliani's Luebeck was the city of Leghorn, which, thanks to the encouragement of the Medici, had grown during the late Renaissance from a small fishing village into a rich and powerful seaport and commercial center. In 1593, Ferdinand I, Duke of Tuscany, addressing himself to "men of the East and West," and expressly mentioning the "Hebrews," invited entrepreneurs from all lands to come to Leghorn, which he made a free port, exempt from all fiscal restrictions, and placed outside the customs frontier of his state. Among the Jews who soon flocked there were many Sephardic merchants; they, though free to live wherever they pleased, preferred to cluster together in one central section of the city, where they began building, at the end of the 16th century, a baroque synagogue that was surpassed in size and beauty only by the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. This "Tempio Israelitico" was unique for its mixture of orthodoxy and modernism: the women had to sit in an upper gallery separated from the men, but the interior decoration resembled that of a baroque church, and music was played on an organ. In this temple, which is still standing, Amedeo's father attended services, but only on the High Holy Days—the family, far from religious, had no regular pew.

In the Leghorn to which Grandfather Modigliani had fled, more or less the way Jews immigrated to the United States a few decades later, the Jewish community could look back upon a long history of complete autonomy. They did not suffer under economic restrictions; as far back as the 17th century the Medici had allowed them to carry arms and discard the yellow badge. In a period when, in papal Rome, it was against the law for a Jew to ride in a cab, many Leghorn Jews owned carriages. Since they constituted at one time as much as a quarter of the city's population, their Christian neighbors often joined them in closing their places of business on the Sabbath. Montesquieu, who visited the place in the early part of the 18th century, found from six to seven thousand Jews who were enjoying "the particular protection of the government." The Grand Duke often came with visiting royalty to attend the temple services. Cynics even maintained that in Leghorn it was safer to strike the Grand Duke than one of the Jewish "nation."

By the latter part of the 19th century, however, the city's fortunes were in decline—partly, it seems, because of the withdrawal of its free-harbor privileges. Jews and Gentiles alike suffered from the consequences. Whether because of unfavorable conditions or of an innate lack of ability—or both—Flaminio Modigliani was a business failure. A commission agent, he kept a *banco* (office) to which clients seldom came. The burden of providing for the family of six fell on his wife's shoulders, and though she seemed hardly cut out for the role, she filled it nevertheless. Well educated, she gave lessons in English and French, and "ghosted" novels and literary essays in English and Italian for a wealthy dilettante. From her Amedeo inherited his good looks as well as his gifts—and perhaps his neurotic disposition too, for Grandfather Garsin was rather unstable, and a sister of Amedeo's mother, highly intellectual and interested in politics, eventually went mad.

It is significant that his father played hardly any except a negative role in Amedeo's life, and that Eugenia was to him both mother and father, so that he seemed to feel himself more a Garsin than a Modigliani. And his maternal grandfather, besides helping his daughter's family financially, took a great interest in her youngest son's development. Much to the disgust and boredom of his two older brothers, who were more interested in ships and sailors, "Dedo" would have serious discussions with his grandfather about philosophy and art when the old man took him and his brothers for long walks along the quays. Young Amedeo remained with his mother long after his two brothers had left for college, Emmanuele to study the law, Umberto engineering.

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MODIGLIANI'S attachment to his native Italy almost equaled his devotion to his mother. Leghorn, established too late to benefit from the glory of the Renaissance, while no great artistic center, was not an artistic desert either. It has a splendid baroque *duomo,* and numerous other churches. In the local museum, and in a privately owned gallery, the young Modigliani could admire works by Ghirlandaio, Signorelli, Titian, Caravaggio, Murillo, and Dürer—quite a variety for a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants. And two outstanding Italian painters of the 19th century, Giovanni Fattori and Vittorio Corco, had been born in Leghorn, and left their mark on the place.

The boy Amedeo received the rudiments of a classical education in the first four grades of the local high school—between 1894 and 1898—and he also read a lot. As an adolescent, he already knew large parts of Dante and Petrarch, Leopardi and Carducci by heart; he admired Baudelaire and Nietzsche, and had made himself well acquainted with several foreign languages.

In Paris, Modigliani learned to speak and write French perfectly, but he remained an Italian for all that. In the beginning he complained about his "damned Italian eyes" that could not get accustomed to the special light of Paris, and he was often homesick, it seems. In one such mood he wrote a nostalgic poem whose first six lines are in Italian, the rest in French. It begins: *Grida e strida di rondini sul Mediterraneo—o Livorno!* ("Cries and shrieks of swallows over the Mediterranean —O Leghorn!") His last words, uttered on a hospital bed, were *"Cara Italia!"*

Just as he was proud of being an Italian, he was also proud of his Jewishness. Paul Guillaume, a French art dealer, recalled in 1931: "Modigliani made a point of being a Jew. On every possible occasion, and particularly when people did not immediately perceive it, he would announce that he was Jewish. He even claimed that his personality embodied the quintessential characteristics of the Jew. He adopted Jewish customs and ways that he had originally been ignorant of but which he noticed among the Jewish [i.e. East European] painters of Montparnasse. Whether he did this out of religious feeling, or simply from joy in the picturesque, I can't tell. . . . He loved Rembrandt . . . and said that Rembrandt might possibly have been a Jew. . . . In his own sculptures he tried deliberately to manifest a brutal power which he called *sens de Jehovah* [the drift, or meaning, of Jehovah]."

Though he had received no Hebrew education, he was able, curiously enough, to write the dedication of a pencil sketch of Chana Orloff, the Jewish sculptress, in Hebrew. Once, when he overheard some Royalists in a Paris café making anti-Semitic remarks, he marched over to them, shouting *"Je suis Juif!"* and silenced them with a threatening gesture. In 1913 Max Jacob, the poet-painter who had just left Judaism for Catholicism (he died years later in a German concentration camp), tried to induce him and the sculptor Jacques Lipchitz to do the same, but Modigliani replied, according to Lipchitz: "I don't follow any religion myself, but if I did, I would keep to my Jewish religion, the one that my family has followed for so many centuries in Leghorn [*sic*]. Mine is a Jewish family that goes back almost to Roman times." On the other hand, Augustus John tells in his autobiography of hearing Modigliani complain about being discriminated against because he was a Jew. *"Alors, c'est malheureux d'être Juif?"* John asked. Modigliani said yes; Jacob Epstein, who was also present on this occasion, dissented strongly.

Whatever other beliefs he turned to (later in life he became a socialist and agnostic), his deepest faith remained art, which he had embraced already in his early adolescence. At the age of fourteen, in 1898, during a vacation from school when he fell sick with typhoid fever, he raved in his delirium about the paintings in the Palazzo Pitti and the Uffizi in Florence, where he had never been, and wept because he could not go to see them. This was the first clear sign of his future vocation. His mother, deeply worried, promised him that as soon as he recovered they would go to Florence together. She kept

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her promise. And also, she sent him shortly after to the best art teacher in Leghorn, a painter named Guglielmo Micheli. Amedeo worked with him from 1898 to 1900, and he was the first and last teacher of art he ever had.

MICHELI, who was born in 1866 and died in 1926, lived long enough to hear of his pupil's posthumous fame, and he seems to have been a competent teacher, giving the boy a lot more in the way of technical training than the latter ever acknowledged later on. Though himself a mediocre artist, he was probably among the best masters Italy had to offer at a time when Italian art lacked creative personalities in general. He belonged to the most progressive Italian school of painting of the period, a group known as the "Macchiaioli" (from *macchia*—"dash of color"), whose members, like the French Impressionists, had discovered the open air, farm cottages, country roads, and the radiance of the sun on earth and water. But the freshness of their subject matter was not matched by a real freshness of technique, and the academy clung to them. Though Micheli painted seascapes vibrant with light, he never won more than a local success.

Modigliani's apprenticeship was relatively short, and the details we know about it are few. In 1900 he was forced to break off his studies because he had fallen sick with tuberculosis. He was treated at the local clinic, but no effective cure for the disease had been developed as yet, and the infection was not completely eliminated. Nor did the sunshine of Southern Italy, where Signora Modigliani sent her son, effect a complete cure. Two decades later, when he was in his mid-thirties, dissipation, fatigue, and malnutrition brought on a fatal return of his illness. For the time being, however, it had been rendered inactive and he had the chance to see Capri, Amalfi, and other places. In Rome he attended the Easter services at St. Peter's and heard the exquisite music; he visited the art galleries, and saw the old as well as the new Italian masters. In Naples, it is said, he was overwhelmed by certain works of Leonardo.

Returning from the South, Modigliani went to Venice, then to Florence, where, at his mother's request, he took the examinations for the local academy of art. He passed, but does not seem to have done much studying at the academy, though he lived and worked in Florence all through 1902 and 1903. The better part of the next three years seems to have been passed in Venice. Periodically, however, he returned to his native Leghorn to spend some time with his family —more precisely, with his beloved mother. A photograph taken of him in 1904, when he was twenty, shows him as an unusually handsome, healthy young man, with thick dark hair, thoughtful eyes, and a soft mouth.

In Venice he associated with a Spanish artist, Ortiz de Zarate, who describes him as a dandy popular with the ladies. De Zarate says also that Modigliani still painted in an academic manner at that time. According to another artist who knew him then, Umberto Brunelleschi, he gave no signs of exceptional talent. But more significant is the fact that Modigliani confided to de Zarate that his burning desire was to become a sculptor, and de Zarate writes that it was only the high cost of the materials of sculpture that kept Modigliani from acting on his heart's desire, so that he remained a painter only because he had no alternative as an artist.

NEITHER de Zarate nor Brunelleschi knew Amedeo intimately, and their accounts, set down after a lapse of decades, should be received with caution. Unfortunately, none of the work Modigliani did before going to Paris seems to have survived—though careful search in the places where he lived in Italy might possibly yield some examples. Yet there exists written and unchallengeable evidence that even before Paris he had adopted a non-academic, anti-conventional outlook on life and art. It is this which makes us question the validity of Florent Fels's assumption that had Modigliani stayed on in Italy he would never have become an important modernist. ("Had he remained in . . . his beloved Italy . . . he would have satisfied his romantic taste—that very taste which,

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in Paris, he violently expunged from his soul with great strength.") We say, instead: it is possible that had Modigliani never left Italy he might have lived more soberly and longer. But there probably would have been the same rebellion. Paris produced neither his talent nor his neurosis. It did, however, enhance, more than another place might have, the morbid symptoms of both.

What encourages us in this opinion are five lengthy letters (hitherto unpublished in English) we possess that were written by the seventeen-year-old Modigliani in 1901 to his close friend Oscar Ghiglia (1879-1945). Ghiglia and Modigliani met first in Micheli's studio; the two youths had many a long discussion as they walked the beaches of Leghorn. In 1902, the year after these letters were written, they shared a place in Florence, and the next year they had separate studios there. But after 1903 their ardent friendship seems to have ended, for reasons unknown to us.

Ghiglia, who was several years older than Modigliani, never achieved fame as an artist, but as a young man he must have responded to Amedeo's enthusiasm. In these letters—all that survive of a long correspondence—the adolescent Modigliani emerges as an admirer of Nietzsche and Baudelaire, but making, alas, all too few references to painting. It is significant that he refers disdainfully to his old teacher, Micheli, because he now considers him highly unoriginal: "Micheli?" he writes from Capri: "Oh my God, how many of his kind there are in Capri . . . regiments!"

Nietzschean is Modigliani's idea that life should be fully lived, without concern for obstacles, but with definite, purposeful intent, and sometimes even in pain, in order to "save one's own dream." And he urges his friend to cultivate sacredly all "that can exalt and excite your intelligence," and to "seek to provoke . . . and create . . . these fertile stimuli, because they can push the intelligence to its maximum creative power."

According to these letters, art for the young Modigliani was not a trade to be learned by diligent application, but rather a state of grace achieved by virtue of intellectual elevation. When this exalted state is attained, the state that follows "the awakening and dissolution of powerful energies," the state in which "excitement" (*orgasmo*) is induced, then, and only then, does one know the joy of creation, which is at the same time a liberation. " . . . I am rich and fertile now, and I need work," Modigliani cries.

WHATEVER de Zarate and Brunelleschi may have thought of Amedeo's early work, this certainly is not the language of a conventional student. From Capri the young artist writes that he is waiting for the right moment "for organizing myself . . . and for working . . . in the good sense of the word, that is to say to dedicate myself with faith (body and soul) to *organizing* and *developing* all the impressions, all the germs of ideas, that I have harvested in this peace, as in a mystic garden." On his visit to the Eternal City the seventeen-year-old enthusiast extols "the Rome that while I speak to you, is not outside, but *inside* me, like a terrible jewel fastened upon its seven hills, like seven imperious ideas. . . . Rome is the orchestration with which I encircle myself, the circumscribed area within which I isolate myself and in which I concentrate my thought. Its feverish sweetness, its tragic countryside, its beautiful and harmonious forms, all these things are mine through my thought and through my work. . . . I seek further to formulate with the greatest possible lucidity the truths about art and life that I have gleaned meagerly from among the beauties of Rome. . . . "

In another letter Amedeo talks to Oscar about his emotional troubles and difficulties: "They are all necessary stages of evolution through which we have to pass and which have no importance other than the end to which they lead. Believe me, the work that has arrived by now at its final stage of gestation, and which has become depersonalized by the obstacle of all particular incidents which have contributed to its fertilization and production, is not worth the trouble of being expressed and translated in style. The efficacy and necessity of style consists exactly

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in this: that beyond being the only vocabulary capable of bringing out an idea, it detaches it [the idea] from the individual who has produced it [and] leaves the way open to that which cannot or should not be said. . . ."

In the last of these letters—what a pity that so very little of Modigliani's correspondence has been preserved!—the youth again refers to his own and his bosom friend's growing pains: "Affirm and surmount yourself always. The man who does not know how to release new desires continually from his energy, to release an almost new individual destined always to express himself by laying low all that is old and rotten, is not a man, he is a bourgeois, a real knave, or what you will. . . ."

It is possible, even likely, that a few years later the artist would have smiled at these manifestations of juvenile exuberance. But I doubt whether he would have repudiated them, for his idealism remained with him throughout his short and agitated life. To the very end he would have subscribed to what he said when only seventeen: "Beauty . . . has some painful duties: these duties create, nevertheless, the most beautiful expressions of the soul."

In any event, it was inevitable that the youth who wrote these letters would soon find a place like Leghorn too narrow and confining. He had heard a lot in Venice about Montmartre and its artists' colony from his friend Ortiz, and by 1906 he was ready to go there. Financed by his family and accompanied by his mother's good wishes, he took the train for France.

ONCE he had arrived in Paris, it turned out that a mere geographical move was not enough—an inner break with his past was necessary. It is ironical, and a little funny, to see how the young man who had been so bold and unconventional in his letters was now shocked and even repelled by the atmosphere of the French capital. It was precisely in Montmartre that he felt the most uncomfortable, discovering that he was, after all, still more of a bourgeois than a free-living bohemian.

It did not help much that he changed his style of dress to brown corduroys, scarlet scarf, and a big black hat; he still looked like a bourgeois at a masquerade. Nor did he become any the more a bohemian by renting a studio in the center of the Latin Quarter, on the Rue Caulaincourt, and furnishing it with a piano, plush drapes, a plaster cast of Beethoven's head, and reproductions of Italian Renaissance paintings. For more than a little while he remained the dutiful, sober student away from home, writing regularly to his mother, and weeping with homesickness when he read her letters. He punctually attended the famous Colarossi school on the Rue Chaumière and diligently sketched from the nude, but always hid the results with his hand. He drank Italian wine—and nothing else—in moderation, had no vices, and kept his bachelor apartment neat. Being unsure of himself this timid, almost reserved Italian would not discuss art with strangers, and he was astonishingly conservative in his views. Once, when Picasso passed him in a café, Modigliani made a derogatory remark about his wearing dirty workmen's clothes; Picasso might have talent, he said, but that did not excuse his uncouth appearance.

The break with the past came, however, before he had spent a full year in Paris.

One day a friend came and found Modigliani's *atelier* completely changed. It was in chaos; the Renaissance reproductions had been stuffed away into a box; and as for the studio's occupant himself—he was now an alcoholic and a drug addict. But far more important, he had also suddenly become a revolutionary in the realm of art. We do not know precisely what caused this sudden transformation from bourgeois into a *"peintre maudit,"* nor are we sure of the exact moment—if there was one—at which it took place. But we do know that André Salmon, the critic and poet, subsequently insisted that Modigliani's talent was directly due to his vices: "From the day he abandoned himself to certain forms of debauchery an unexpected light came upon him, transforming his art. From that day on he became one who must be counted among the masters of living

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art." Another biographer, Charles Douglas, quoting André Utter—the husband of Suzanne Valadon and stepfather of Utrillo—as his informant, claims, however, to know the very day on which Modigliani's metamorphosis as an artist, if not as a man, took place: "One night, at an alcohol and hashish orgy *chez* Pigard . . . Modigliani suddenly gave a yell and, grabbing paper and pencil, began to draw feverishly, shouting that he had found 'the way.' When he had finished he triumphantly produced a study of a woman's head and the swan neck for which he has become famous."

THERE is, of course, no medical reason for suggesting that either alcohol or hashish made Modigliani "invent" the characteristic features of his mature style. Alcohol and drugs merely helped to release the timid young man, who lacked love, friendship, and guidance, from his inhibitions so that he could proceed faster toward that freedom of which he had dreamed in his juvenile letters. Just because he wanted to be free to "distort" —that is, force his own artistic vision upon reality—he decided, apparently, that he had to live the life that would, as he saw it, guarantee him the maximum of freedom. Alcohol, hashish, and sexual promiscuity were a means of liberating himself from Leghorn and all it stood for. And he knew that his family, his beloved mother included, would reject his new way of painting as crazy.

The Jews of Leghorn lived sober lives, drank only wine, married early, and raised families. But this renegade chose for a friend the painter Utrillo, an alcoholic who would not have been admitted to the Modigliani apartment at home. Modigliani also had countless affairs with women of all sorts, most of them quite unlike his mother—models, waitresses, prostitutes. His whole life was a succession of protests: against the bourgeois smugness of his family of impoverished bankers, against his old art teacher Micheli, and against a society that refused to recognize and reward his talent.

Picasso once remarked on his exhibitionism: "You can find Utrillo drunk anywhere . . . but Modigliani is always drunk right in front of the Rotonde or the Dôme"—that is, where he could be seen by writers, critics, and fellow artists. Often he carried this exhibitionism to extremes: when he got drunk enough he would strip naked at social gatherings. And this exhibitionism led him always, when he painted or drew from life, to put something of his own appearance as it were, into that of his sitters. What his contemporaries may have taken for exaggerated vanity was, however, more uncontrolled exuberance than anything else. As he replied—according to the writer Michel Georges-Michel—when a doctor reproached him for too much drinking:

"I need a flame in order to paint, in order to be consumed by fire. My concierge and the butcher boy have no need of alcohol, especially if it does them harm. They must conserve their precious lives. . . . But as for me, my life, it is important only because of what I put on my canvas. . . . So what difference does it make if I give an instant of my life, if in exchange I can create a work that, perhaps, will last."

But with this statement, we have long lost all trace of "Dedo," the idealistic, spoiled youth from Leghorn, and entered a chapter that might be called "Modigliani the Damned."

THE rest of the story is so well known that it need not be repeated here in detail. Modigliani had a dozen reckless years of life left, and except for a few months in Leghorn, where his family tried in vain to reform him, he spent them all in Paris ruining himself systematically—and yet working too. He smoked incessantly. Under the influence of alcohol and drugs he made long, shocking speeches before the astonished patrons of bistros; once, when arrested after a riotous scene, he startled the police with an impassioned and dramatic recital of poetry.

He had a universal fascination for women. He could give them little, not even his undivided attention, but this did not keep them from throwing themselves at his feet, and they were only too eager to supply him with

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everything that he needed: brushes, colors, canvases, alcohol, and drugs. One married woman, despairing because she could not possess Modigliani exclusively, became a drug addict herself and eventually died in a sanatorium. Fickle as he was, he never married, but towards the end of his life he found a French girl sufficiently self-effacing to be able to live with him. When a daughter was born to Jeanne Hébuterne, "Modi" made an effort to register her birth, but on the way to the municipal office he stopped at a bar and forgot all about it. Time and again the beautiful Jeanne would follow him to his favorite café, and cajole him to come back home with her before he became too drunk to walk. When Modigliani died, and she saw his dead body on a hospital bed, she proceeded a few hours later to commit suicide.

Countless were the people Modigliani captivated by the wit and charm he could display, even when totally drunk. One of them was a Polish-born poet and art dealer, Leopold Zborowski. At a time when nearly everybody else thought Modigliani crazy and without talent, Zborowski was already firmly convinced of his genius, and he pestered every art patron he knew to come and see his friend's work. But very few canvases were sold, and even those at ridiculously low prices; Modigliani remained abysmally poor to the end of his days.

Zborowski survived his protégé by twelve years—he died in 1932—and lived to see Modigliani's fame rise to the skies. In 1922, only two years after the artist's death, the museum in Grenoble bought one of his pictures, the first in a long succession to be acquired by museums; in the same year a retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Galérie Bernheim Jeune in Paris. Eight years later the celebrated Venice Biennale included about fifty of Modigliani's works in an effort to make amends to an artist who during his lifetime had been so sorely neglected.

An indefatigable worker even when drunk, Modigliani was a pioneer in sculpture even more than in painting, but only about twenty of the stones he carved have been preserved. They show him as influenced by Brancusi, and an admirer of the anonymous Negro folk carvers of Africa whose directness of approach, simplicity, and economy of means he emulated. As a painter, on the other hand, he left behind five hundred oils in addition to countless works in other media. Here the main influence was, in addition to African sculpture (whose effects were perhaps even more visible in his painting than in his sculpture), the great "primitives" of Tuscany who preceded the Renaissance masters. From them he learned how to take liberties with line, distorting it to step up dramatic intensity of expression and bring out the inner stresses of his emotion.

There are certain features by which even a layman can recognize Modigliani's elegant portraits of Montmartre and Montparnasse characters, as well as his lush yet somehow virginal nudes. But it is not for its mannerisms that his art has become immortal, nor is it these that lead people to pay anywhere from five to ten thousand dollars for one of his canvases. The important thing is that Modigliani created formal and universal beauty in perpetuating the essentials of a face or body.

His work, first shown in this country on a large scale in 1929, was celebrated in a huge retrospective exhibit held in Cleveland and then New York in 1951. What he stands for in the story of modern art has been summed up most succinctly by the French poet Francis Carco:

"A life marked by poverty, worry, the desire to escape platitudes by contradictions, by the wish to surpass, by thirst for punishment and the willingness to become a target for the supposedly astute. Life of an artist, life of exaltations! I shall not recount the picturesque bohemianisms of it or the paradoxical and constant defiance of rule; or the absence of all traces of domesticity. But for all that, for all the defects and qualities, the taste for unhappiness and the exceptional, the torrent of graces, the deliriousness and the naughtiness, Modigliani leaves a void behind him that cannot soon be filled."

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THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY

An Autobiographical Story

JACOB TWERSKY

I WAS four years old when I came down with scarlet fever and complications. For a long time I lay dazed, and then my mind began to clear and I was afraid I had the measles again. For whenever anyone had the measles, the windows were hung with thick paper to shut out the light, and now too the windows seemed covered. But Mother said I didn't have the measles again and that the windows weren't covered, and I became painfully confused. Maybe I wasn't trying hard enough to see, I thought, straining my eyes and seeing only shadows through a dreadful haze. Maybe there wasn't enough light, but Mother said there was. I continued to strain my eyes and look at the shadows. The shadow of the fireplace, like most of the others, lay placidly on the floor and did not trouble me, but Mother's shadow was awesome in its bizarre movements.

By the time I could leave my bed, my sight had somehow grown considerably better, though it was still much inferior to the perfect vision that had been mine before the illness. Not many people, however, noticed my defect, for I was as active as any child. But of course my parents knew and they took me to the leading ophthalmologists of the town in Poland where we lived. The ophthalmologists were puzzled by my eye condition and could do nothing except advise that we wait patiently till I grew out of it.

Unable to do anything else, we waited, my parents naturally distraught though hopeful and I frequently as perplexed as on that day when the windows seemed covered. As though I sensed that there would be a time of dearth, I hungrily sought out visual impressions and stored them up. But paradoxically enough, I expected my sight to return to full strength any day. My visual impressions of that time are indelible: I recall the ever intensifying blue of dawn coming through the windows of my room, the flight of bright yellow butterflies over the high grass by the pond, the galloping past me of glistening horses and the orange sun setting over hillocks of growing wheat. I recall also Mother's affectionate smile and Father's compassionate eyes.

When I was about six, my eyes began to hurt all the time and to tear before a strong light. I used to like to look at the glow of the kerosene lamp's zinc reflector, but now I had to turn my head away. At supper Mother placed the tall tea kettle between me and the lamp. My sight grew worse continually and soon I could only see light and shadows and colors. Alarmed, we again consulted the ophthalmologists, and again they could tell us nothing. But Father learned of a famous doctor in Bialistok and Mother decided to take me to him.

THE train was slow and rusty with age. Almost somberly it swayed and rattled past innumerable hamlets and towns, dark patches of birch and pine forest, and newly furrowed fields. The fields exuded the vibrant scent of turned earth, which however

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JACOB TWERSKY was born in Poland in 1920 and came to this country at the age of eight; the blindness whose onset he describes in this story became total by the time he was thirteen. Mr. Twersky attended the City College of New York—where he was on the wrestling team—and Columbia and New York Universities, and is at present an instructor in history at City College. He has also served as a counselor of war-blinded veterans for the Veterans Administration, and is the author of a novel, *The Face of the Deep,* which is to be published this month by World Publishing Company.

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was barely perceptible inside the train because of the coal smoke and the smell of black bread and perspiration. There were mostly peasants and soldiers—some snoring, some talking, and some playing cards—sitting on the benches that ran the length of the cars.

Mother and I sat in a corner. I was excited by the mere fact that we were going somewhere, as well as by the prospect of my eyes being all right on our return. But then I grew sleepy; trains do that to me. Mother, however, was tensely awake, as I could tell by touching her.

I became more and more aware of the rocking motion of the train and the lullaby of the wheels, and I put my head in Mother's lap. The wooden bench was unyielding beneath my hip and ribs, but Mother's warm thigh was soft under my cheek. I felt her silk dress against my lips and closed my eyes. Mother stroked my hair, her whole being reaching out to me. When she thought I was asleep, she wept.

Once the train jerked to a stop and I woke, but felt too comfortable to stir or open my eyes. I fell asleep again, smelling the steam and hearing it hiss and hearing also men shout from far off, their voices hollow like the voices of peasants calling each other in the fields.

It was night before we arrived at Bialistok. Stiffly, Mother and I got off the train, crossed the high tracks, and stepped into a droshky. In a voice tired and strained she directed the driver to an inn—it was too late to visit the doctor. The driver clucked to the horse and the droshky bounced away noisily over the cobblestones. Mother sighed and leaned back on the creaking leather seat, and I looked off to the side and thought I saw blue moonlight on blue grass.

AT THE inn we had supper in a low room whose walls were covered with tattered yellow paper. Of the several other guests in the room the most conspicuous was a little man who smelled of cheese. He traveled about selling cheese and he had with him his valise of odorous samples. After we had baked potatoes and boiled chicken and tea, we went up to our room, the innkeeper preceding us with a candle. The stairs squeaked and the halls were musty. In the stuffy little room the innkeeper gave Mother the candle and left. Mother locked the door, tried the lock, and though it was strong, put a chair against the door. Her hand went to her bosom to touch the roll of money tied in a handkerchief. Mother was frightened, I knew as I pressed against her. And indeed the place seemed mysterious enough for robbers or even ghosts to appear at any moment.

But of course nothing happened during the night, save that Mother, thoroughly exhausted, slept soundly, and I stayed awake. I listened to her soft breathing and to the shuffling steps that now and then passed the door. I lay quietly so that the straw mattress would not rustle and wake her. I did not stay too close to her either, though I wanted to, for she was warm. But she had to sleep because she would not be afraid while she slept. I myself, though, could not sleep because I had slept too much on the train. So I lay awake with my face in the pillow and thought. I thought of my friends and also of my brother Henry who was two years older than I and well started in school. I had never been to school.

Hen was lucky to have those round counting pegs and steel compasses for drawing and those glossy books. How wonderful it would be to learn to read, to read stories like Grandma told. But Hen didn't like to read, didn't even like school. He played hookey and the truant officer, all fat and puffing, had to chase him. He chased Hen to the swimming hole and to the movies. Hen was lucky. And tomorrow, after the doctor made my eyes all right, I would be just like Hen. Only I'd read stories. I'd lie on my stomach before the glazed-tile fireplace, every so often glancing at the glowing silvery handles of the fire screen, and reading stories about animals and robbers in the woods. And like Hen, I'd have counting pegs and those other things and a satchel for my books that I could sling over my shoulder and a flashlight with red light to come home from school with

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when winter nights came early or when there were snowstorms. Best of all, I would have a regular school cap with a shiny celluloid visor. All that would be after tomorrow.

TOWARD noon next day Mother and I sat in the doctor's waiting room. We were alone, but there were voices beyond the closed door ahead of us. Behind us heavy wagons rolled through the street, the drivers shouting and cursing. My hands kept getting wet all the while and I kept drying them on the crackling leather of the couch. I moved closer to Mother who smelled of the scented soap and face powder she used.

"Will he operate on my eyes, Mama? Cut them?"

"Hush, darling. What an imagination! If he operates he'll do it in the hospital and not today and it won't hurt because he'll make you sleep."

"Nothing will happen to me in that room?"

"He'll only look at your eyes."

She put her arm about me and I was somewhat consoled, but when we went into the doctor's room all my joints felt stiff. The doctor closed the door and there were just the three of us in that cool, shadowy, silent room. Mother talked to the doctor and he replied in a German accent. He put his big soft hand on my shoulder and led me to a chair. The doctor touched my eyes, pressed down on them and shone lights into them, making them tear and grow convulsed and making my throat hard and dry. He got some shiny objects and did something with them before my eyes. I felt sure the cutting would begin, in spite of what Mother had said, and I gripped the chair. My feet did not reach the floor, so I tightened my whole body to keep them steady.

"We won't hurt you," the doctor said softly, and put his hand on my head. "Such golden hair!" he said. "Ach, he looks just like a pretty little German boy."

He pressed hard on my eyes, and I almost cried out, but I was determined to make no sound.

"So, so," he said sadly. "We are just about through."

More lights, and then he helped me to my feet. I stood by the chair as he called Mother aside. I stood drying my eyes and hearing the whispering without catching the words. Mother came to me and took my hand silently.

"Goodbye, goodbye," the doctor sputtered warmly, putting his hand again on my head.

In the street Mother could no longer control herself, and oblivious to the passers-by, to everything but her sorrow, she shook and sobbed.

"Don't cry, Mama," I begged, and because she did not stop and because I knew without anyone telling me what the doctor had whispered, I also began to sob.

Now Mother stopped, for she was very strong when it came to her children.

"Ssh," she soothed. "It will be all right, darling. It will be all right yet. There is a great God." I believed her.

WE GOT back to our town that night and drove home in a droshky from the railroad station. We passed through the modern section where the streets were clean and well lighted and where there were even a few automobiles; and then we went through the old part where there were crumbling houses, stagnant pools in the gutters, and darkness except for the lights of the droshky and an occasional lantern on a gate post. Our home was at the very edge of town, where it joined the countryside. We had an apartment on the second floor of a group of attached wooden buildings that opened on a cobblestoned courtyard.

The droshky halted before the entrance to the courtyard. It was late and there was not a sound and the gate was locked. Mother and I got out, and she pulled the bell-rope. The silence was broken by the gong and by the droshky's driving off. We waited in the stillness that came again. I was chilly and had my hands in my pockets. I thought of my brothers and of how soft my bed would feel. Mother rang the gong once more, and we heard the sound of running steps. Father, carrying a flashlight and calling out excitedly, ran toward us.

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He had not known when we would arrive or else he would have been at the station. He wanted to know immediately all that had happened in Bialistok.

"Let us in, Papa," I said. "It's cold."

He must have looked at Mother and known all, for he became subdued.

"Up you go for a little ride," Father said, opening the gate and lifting me to his shoulder.

We went up the stairs, Mother following. Henry and four-year-old Victor were waiting in the kitchen.

"What are they doing out of bed?" Mother wanted to know.

"They heard the noise," Father said. "Everything's fine. Don't worry about a thing. Your sister fed us, talked our ears off, and now thank God she's gone home to sleep."

"Can you see now?" Vic asked me.

"How was the train?" Hen said.

"Go to bed, both of you, this instant," Mother said.

They protested, but Father got them into the next room, talked to them, and then they went to bed. Mother fried some eggs for me; she didn't want to eat anything herself. She and Father stood over me while I ate.

"It's all the more important now," Father said, "that I make the arrangements right away to go to America."

Father had long been planning to go to America, establish himself there, and send for the family.

"They have great doctors over there," Father said. "And no matter what happens it will be better for him there. They have better special schools and—"

"Stop!" Mother cried, and started to weep.

Father took her in his arms and calmed her. I went into the room that I shared with Hen.

"What are you sniffling about?" Hen said.

"Who's sniffling?"

I noticed that I was and stopped it.

"You're not going to be a cry-baby, are you?" Hen said, and then he added, "I'm going to let you play with my pigeons."

I began to undress, feeling suddenly elated as I thought of Hen's pigeons: how they rustled about in the dovecote on the roof, how downy and lively they were to the touch, how they had looked in flight. Hen knew that I liked the pigeons, especially to feed them, though only rarely had he allowed me near them. But now everything was different, I thought, and that thought instantly made me lose interest in the pigeons and as I got into bed I was glum again. Fortunately I fell asleep at once.

THE following days were hard for me and hard for my parents. It was a time for me of brooding, of inward resistance to the maudlin sympathy of relatives and friends of the family. It was a time of inactivity in which I sat or lay always extremely depressed and morbidly quiet. Only at night would I weep and then I would bite into the pillow so that Hen would not hear me. I was realizing at last, if only in part, the enormity of what had happened to me.

Still, there is a limit, especially for a child, to the amount of inactivity and depression he can endure. I reached that limit and began to take an interest once more in my world. Each of us, to stay alive, makes of himself the center of creation. My world was made up of the house I lived in, the yard, the street, the market place, the pond just outside of town. I could get about that world even with my eyes closed, though of course I kept them open to take advantage of the little sight I still had, kept them open to see the shadows and colors and the glorious light.

I started playing with Hen's pigeons. I also played with Vic, and we had a game in which we pretended to be post office clerks and used pieces of red and yellow paper for stamps. Also, I played soldiers in the yard with some of my cousins, marching about with reeds from the pond for rifles. Then there were the boys in the street who were still my friends, and with them I would go wading in the pond or on walks to the bakery where you could get your cap filled with wafers for only a *groshen*. In fact, I grew as active as I had ever been, running about

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through our entire neighborhood. Mother became highstrung worrying about me, but I insisted on freedom and went into tantrums when it was in the least threatened.

All during the summer I was almost contented, for I had little time to brood and my eyes mysteriously stopped hurting and tearing, making strong again the hopes that I would soon regain my sight. But after the summer there were two blows that shattered my contentment. They came, as is often the case, one immediately upon the other.

One morning I sat on the bottom step of the stairs to our apartment and watched the glint of the cobblestones. I kept fingering the wood and metal surfaces of the harmonica which a kind woman in the neighborhood had given me. The wood was as smooth as ebony and the metal as smooth as ice. I was aware also of the slight wind that stirred my hair and carried the scent of ripened crab apples. I began listening to the sounds of work from the shops on the street: squeaky and rasping filing from the tinsmith's, flat and almost rhythmic hammering from the cobbler's, sibilant planing from the carpenter's. I put the harmonica to my lips and blew into it to hear more sounds.

The old caretaker clopped out of her ground-floor apartment in her wooden slippers and clopped past me, her many skirts sighing and smelling of lye. She clopped over the cobblestones and dropped some refuse into the wooden box in the corner of the yard, near the latrine, near the festoons of flypaper. Turning, she came back toward me and I could feel her eyes on me. I stopped blowing into the harmonica.

"That's a fine musical instrument," she croaked. "Practicing for your begging days, eh?"

I cringed.

"The accursed of God," the old woman said.

I fled up the stairs. I rushed into our apartment and burst out crying. I could not speak when Father ran out of the study to inquire what was wrong. He bent over me and I could see the red of his beard through my tears. I tore away from him, suddenly wanting to be alone, and ran into my room. He did not follow me, as though he understood what I wanted. And because Mother was out shopping and had taken Vic along, and because Hen was at school, I could be alone.

Suddenly I knew I hated the old woman and was not afraid of her. She wasn't going to chase me into the house. I got my hoop from among my toys and ran out before Father could stop me. I went into the street and with extreme seriousness began rolling the hoop. I could hear it when it fell and so was able to locate it and start it rolling again.

THE street was almost empty. Occasionally a wagon rumbled by. The water-carrier passed, empty buckets clanging on his pole. The woman who sold pickled apples shuffled by, rehearsing her sales song under her breath, the song she would sing loudly at the first busy corner. The butcher boy came along, smelling of meat and sawdust.

Suddenly the street was full of noise. A troop of little boys and girls, all too young for school, came skipping and laughing and shouting toward me. They came nearer and grew quiet. They lined up along the curb and watched me, hardly making a sound. I was self-conscious and wanted to leave, but I was not going to be chased for the second time that day. It was a challenge. I rolled the hoop with great determination. Everything seemed to depend on staying where I was and rolling the hoop.

The children as they watched me lost their fear of me. They began to talk and laugh again, but not to move away. Their noise made it hard to locate the hoop when it fell. Once I did not hear it fall and groped for it on the ground, the sweat rolling down my face. I felt terribly ashamed. But I found it and rolled it again. The children screamed with delight. The hoop fell once more without a sound. I groped for it again, hating it, myself, the children, and everything else. I could not find it. The children laughed hilariously. My hands were full of dirt from the street. I could not find the hoop.

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"Blind, blind," a little boy sang.

The others joined in. There was a chorus singing, "Blind, blind." I grew panicky. I whirled about. I ran through them into the gutter and then, realizing my error, turned and ran toward the yard. They pursued me, singing. Again I was being chased, but I thought only of escape. I shot up the stairs, past our apartment, for Father was there and I could not explain to anyone what was wrong. I continued up the stairs, up to the attic. My only haven was the attic, horrible though it was because of its darkness and ghosts. At the attic door I hesitated, but I could still hear the children, so I pushed the door open and entered. The place was moldy, full of dust and cobwebs, its floor littered with discarded boots, broken furniture, and rotting newspapers and grimy bottles. I stood catching my breath, feeling the hardness in my throat and fearing the ghosts, especially the one who had bleated like a sheep not long ago.

SOMEONE was coming up the stairs. I stiffened. Here was something that I feared even more than ghosts. They were still not satisfied. They were coming to get me. I went deeper into the attic. I crouched in the darkness. The door squeaked. My hand touched a bottle and gripped it by the neck, ready to swing it at the first child who approached me.

"Son."

I dropped the bottle and stood up but did not answer. Father struck a match and walked up to me. The match burned out and the darkness was complete again.

"I saw it all from the window," Father said quietly. "It was hard not to interfere, but I knew you would feel worse if I did. You've grown up very quickly these last few months."

His warm tone loosened my throat, allowed me to talk.

"Papa, I hate them. I hate them."

"Not really. It isn't in you to hate. What you feel will pass. You cannot understand me now, but you will learn that only the shallow and the weak will ever taunt you or make you feel ashamed. And the shallow and weak are not to be hated but pitied."

I had not listened consciously. Instead I had somehow heard the old woman's accusation again.

"The old woman says I'm the accursed of God."

"The caretaker?"

"Yes. She said it before when I ran into the house."

"So that was it."

Father sounded as though he were choking. He cleared his throat but said nothing. This was a blow to him too, as was the taunting of the children, but an even more severe one. He was a rabbi who even though a young man was reputed an outstanding theological scholar, but how could he explain to a small hurt boy the ways of God to man?

"The old woman is a poor fool," he finally said. "God loves us all."

Father hesitated, seemed about to go on, sighed and was silent. He seemed lost as he groped for my hand. He found my hand and a melting warmth swept over me. I pressed against him, hating no one. It was not what he had said, but rather his tone and his mere presence that gave me assurance, that made me feel that I was not something to be chased, to be mocked. Now I could cry.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

BOSTON'S JEWISH COMMUNITY: EARLIER DAYS

A Few Pages from a Rich History

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

VISITORS did not think well of the early Bostonians. One of them in 1699 described the place as follows: "The buildings, like their women . . . neat and handsome. And their streets, like the hearts of the male inhabitants, being paved with pebble." Another visitor, described as "an unpleasant Englishman" by a historian of Boston, said of them, "Money [was] Their God, and Large Possessions the only Heaven they covet." John Adams was later to cry out: "The morals of our people are much better; their manners are more polite and agreeable; they are purer English; our language is better; our taste is better; our persons are handsomer; our spirit is greater; our laws are wiser; our religion is superior; our education is better." This statement, it may be assumed, would persuade few outside of New England.

No English colony in what was to become the United States has left the record of Massachusetts for bigotry and cruelty. And yet Jews ventured there, and there is no record of the persecution of a Jew as such. On the contrary, they seem to have been fairly well treated.

Solomon Franco reached Boston with a cargo in 1649, nineteen years after the settlement was founded. But he was no match, it seems, for the early Yankees and he was stranded—penniless. They were much kinder to him than they would have been to a Quaker and let him have a few shillings a week out of the public treasury until he could get passage back to Holland.

In the next century, a number of Jews were "warned out" of Boston by the selectmen: among them, perhaps, Isaac Moses (d. 1818) who was to become a leading merchant of New York. He financed a cargo of corn sent for the relief of Boston during the Revolution. But the selectmen in "warning out" were not acting against Jews but against any stranger who might become a "resident" within the meaning of the poor laws and for whose maintenance the township would be liable.

In so religious a community there was, of course, much spiritual pressure against lonely Jews to become Christians, and a number were converted. There is a tale of Cotton Mather that he used a little trickery in his eagerness to convert one of the early Jewish residents of Boston, Joseph Frazon (or Frazier); but the minister was found out and Frazon would have none of his arguments and died a Jew. His body was carried to Newport (1703/4), where there was "a

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CHARLES REZNIKOFF here adds the Jewish community of Boston to COMMENTARY's gallery of American Jewish community "portraits"—which has so far included the communities of Richmond, San Francisco, Montreal, New Haven, and various other cities. Mr. Reznikoff, author of a number of volumes of fiction and poetry, has devoted himself in recent years to studies in the history of the Jews in this country; and he here gives a chronicle of the Jews of Boston, up to the time of the coming of the newer immigrants from Eastern Europe. Readers of COMMENTARY will recall Mr. Reznikoff's "Chronicles of the Lost" (April 1946) and "New Haven: The Jewish Community" (May 1947). He has also at various times contributed poetry to our pages. His most recent book is *The Jews of Charleston* (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950).

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Jew burying-place." The most conspicuous of the early converts was Judah Monis (1683-1764), who taught Hebrew at Harvard for about forty years to the reluctant students.

The first Boston tax list (1674) has the name of a Jew—Rowland Gideon. Joseph Frazon and his brother Samuel were merchants. (Their father and grandfather had lived in the Dutch possessions in Brazil.) Isaac Lopez, who came to Boston from London in 1716, was also a merchant. He was elected a constable at an annual town meeting and paid a fine not to serve. In 1722 he had permission to put up a timber building. At about the same time another Jew, Joseph Benjamin, came from the West Indian island of Barbados, where the English had settled. In 1716, Michael Asher was running a snuff mill and fifteen years later, with characteristic Jewish versatility, had a shop where he sold chocolate, "milk bread," and "New York strong beer."

It was hard, no doubt, to make a living in Boston. In 1728, Isaac Lopez was in hiding from his creditors. Michael Asher lost the plot of ground where he had a shop with Isaac Solomon. The two had set part of the plot aside as a burying ground for "the Jewish nation." Many years later at the time of the battle of Bunker Hill, according to the notes of Sir Henry Clinton's advice to the British on how to land their troops, there was a "Jews burying ground" in Charlestown. If there was such a burying ground, no other reference to it has been found.

In 1739, Joseph Brandon was selling "choice Dum-fish salt and West India Rum." Emanuel Abrams was selling snuff, in 1754, and had to deny by advertisement the advertisement of a competitor that the snuff was "musty Trash." And young Jews studying how to become merchants under the great Aaron Lopez of Newport would stay in Boston from time to time upon his business.

The most distinguished Jew of Boston at the end of the 18th century was Moses Michael Hays (b. 1739) of a family that came from Holland. He was probably born in New York City. When he became a freeman of that city, his occupation was described as watchmaker. From New York he went to Jamaica and from Jamaica to Newport, and here he was a merchant. After the Revolution he settled in Boston, where he was an insurance broker: "a man much respected, not only on account of his large wealth, but for his many personal virtues," to quote the Reverend Samuel J. May (1797-1871), the abolitionist. The business of insurance broker was itself much respected: certainly, it was on the side of the angels. (Insurance in Boston was limited in those days chiefly to marine insurance; it was not until 1795 that a company for fire insurance was incorporated, and it was not until 1823 that the first life insurance policy was issued.)

In 1784 Hays helped organize the first bank in Boston. Like other Jews, he was drawn to the Masonic order by the benevolence of its principles and was grand master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts (1788-92). He died in Boston in 1805. A copy of his portrait by Gilbert Stuart (the original was lost in a fire) shows a rather handsome face—firm mouth, strong chin, and dark, appraising eyes.

Hays brought up his two nephews, children of a widowed sister who had been married to the rabbi of the Newport congregation. The elder, Judah Touro (1775-1854), later astonished the country by the munificence of his gifts to Jews and Christians. Although he had long been a resident of New Orleans at the time, he gave $10,000 to finish the Bunker Hill monument. His younger brother, Abraham (1777-1822), left $10,000 to the city hospital of Boston and $5,000 each to the city orphan asylum for boys and the city orphan asylum for girls. (Judah Touro left the same institutions the same amounts.) To be exempt from the tax for support of the Congregational Church, imposed on those who were not members of some other church, Abraham Touro appeared before the selectmen of Boston in 1816 and requested the town clerk to set out in the records that he was a Jew and belonged to a synagogue.

Judah Hays (1772-1832), the only son of Moses Michael Hays, was elected a fireward in 1805—the first Jew elected to public office in Boston (except for Isaac Lopez's selection as a constable almost a century before). He was one of the founders of the Boston Athenaeum. Two of the sisters of Judah Hays married Jews of Richmond, and the

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other two followed their sisters to Virginia.

Abraham Touro was the largest shareholder in the company that owned the Amoskeag Canal (chartered 1798) and its vice-president, and he owned a few shares of the Middlesex Canal; but Touro and his uncle, Moses Michael Hays, and Hays's son, Judah, were exceptions among the merchants and bankers of English stock to whom the prosperity of Boston in those days was chiefly due. And it was many years before there was a Jew of consequence again in Boston. There was none among the owners of the packet ships and clippers that made the city a great port in the first half of the 19th century; none among the owners of the first factories along the rivers of Massachusetts; nor among those who made Boston, as its historians say, "the undisputed literary center of America."

II

A NUMBER of Algerian Jews, it is said, settled in Boston in the 1830's. German Jews began to arrive about 1837. They were chiefly of two kinds: those who came from Southern Germany and those from "*hinter* Berlin" (back of Berlin)—which to other German Jews classed them practically as Poles. (The Prussian province of Posen had been part of Poland half a century before.)

These German immigrants were great believers in the principles of democracy that were making the United States a great nation and agitating Central Europe—culminating in the unsuccessful revolts of 1848. Few of the German immigrants came from Europe directly to Boston as the Irish did; for, if the terminus of the Cunard Line was originally Boston, that of the Hamburg-American Line, which began to operate in 1848, was New York. (To this day, a number of distinguished Boston Jews have come from other cities of the United States: several became part of the community by way of Harvard.) But in 1840 "a Hebrew was [still] an unusual sight in Boston," according to Bacon's *Dictionary of Boston* (1883).

In 1842, when the German Jews who were to establish the first synagogue in Boston first met for prayers, it was a city of about 80,000; shipping was its chief business; it had twenty-nine banks, twenty-eight insurance companies, and sixty-eight churches. The manufacture of ready-made clothing, in the sale of which many German Jews were to make money, had begun in Boston about 1830—probably for the seamen and whalers. The immigrants were immediately concerned, of course, with the problem of making a living. But another important question was that of a proper place to be buried in; and, even if an immigrant was not very religious, at the season of the Days of Awe, if not on the Sabbath, he, too, felt like pouring out his heart before the Lord who listens to the miseries of a peddler as to the problems of princes.

AT THE celebration of the circumcision of Peter Spitz's first son in 1843, a number of the immigrants who had been meeting regularly for prayers decided to form a congregation. There were eighteen of them: the owner of the Railroad Hotel on Church Street, his assistant, and, among others, two capmakers, a furrier and hat-presser, a dealer in soap (which he also manufactured), someone in the dry goods business, and a couple of peddlers. They called the congregation Ohabei Shalom, that is to say, "Lovers of Peace," but it was translated by them modestly as "Friends of Peace." This was the second congregation in New England. (The first had been organized in Newport in 1658—almost two centuries before.) The congregation of Ohabei Shalom was soon joined by two more capmakers, another peddler, and a dealer in lace. There are pictures of Peter Spitz and his wife. His long dark hair is carefully combed to one side and he has fashionable chin-whiskers; his dark tie is carefully knotted under the narrow collar of his white shirt; his wife has her dark hair parted twice, at the right and left, and the hair in the center brushed straight back; she wears a narrow black ribbon about her white throat and has a large jeweled pin on her dress: friendly faces, already substantial citizens in whose home many a poor immigrant, no doubt, had a warm welcome and plenty of good food such as he had not had since he left Germany—if he had had it there.

In 1844 the congregation was permitted to have a cemetery in East Boston. There had been opposition in the city council: the first petition by "trustees of a religious society of the Israelitish denomination" had been de-

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nied; but in the second petition the purchasers were buying the land as a cemetery for themselves. Now they were ready for this world and the next. A Christian clergyman who visited the congregation that year "on the feast of trumpets" found them worshiping in an upper room in the house of one of the members, probably their reader, Abraham Saling, and contrasted this place of worship with Solomon's temple. There were about forty present, and many were reading their prayers, the clergyman concluded, as if they understood the Hebrew. "Every man," he noted, "took part in the service," and he did not mind—apparently even approved—that at times they called upon the Lord with a loud voice: "There was far more voice used," he wrote, "than is often heard in the beautiful responsive service at Trinity or St. Paul's."

Congregation Ohabei Shalom was incorporated in 1845. It had then forty members. The ritual first adopted was that of the Bavarian city of Fürth—a city friendly to the Jews and which had become prosperous because of it. This was the ritual of the synagogue until 1852, according to *The By-Laws of Temple Ohabei Shalom Prefaced with an Historical Sketch* (1907). The religious school was established in 1849. At about that time, the congregation had as an auxiliary—to help the congregation and those in need—the "Society of Brotherly Love." It derived some of its funds by fining members who were absent from services. It was not until 1851 that the congregation could build a synagogue. That year one of its members, Alexander S. Saroni, advanced the money for a plot of land on Warren Street (now Warrenton), and here the first synagogue in Boston was dedicated in 1852. A number of Christians subscribed to the building fund. The mayor of Boston was present at the dedication and so was the abolitionist Theodore Parker (1810-1860), preacher of a radical Unitarianism. B'nai Jeshurun of New York sent its rabbi, Morris J. Raphall, who delivered a sermon in English, and the New York congregation also lent Ohabei Shalom a Scroll of the Law.

The synagogue was of wood and two stories high; the auditorium, including a gallery for the women, was large enough for 400 (not too large for the eighty members and their families), "finished in a very neat but plain manner," according to the report in a newspaper. On top of the Ark was not only a white marble slab with the Ten Commandments in gilt letters but also "several varieties of choice flowers in pots." In front of the Ark was a small desk on which was a copy of the Scriptures, and the reader stood on a stand about three or four feet from the Ark and faced it: between the Ark and stand was the usual passageway. In the rear behind the auditorium, according to another report, were "bathing rooms for the females of the society, after the ancient customs of the Israelites." The religious school, according to one report, was in a room opposite the synagogue; according to another, the classroom was also in the rear. About thirty children were taught Hebrew and German.

A congregation of Polish Jews, known as Beth Israel, did not last long. In 1854 Ohabei Shalom, the "Lovers of Peace," divided into two factions over the hiring of a *hazan* or cantor: those who came from "*hinter* Berlin" and Poland and prayed according to the *minhag* Poland, and the minority who wished the services to be according to their own *minhag*. The latter formed Congregation Adath Israel.

The president of Ohabei Shalom belonged to the faction that organized Adath Israel and he took along the account book of Ohabei Shalom, their *shofar* (ram's horn trumpet), and the Scroll of the Law. The *shofar* has been in the possession of Temple Israel, as the congregation is now known, to this day. But then the members of Adath Israel gave up any claim to the cemetery and the synagogue and to the legacy of $5,000 that Judah Touro had left "Ohabaye Shalome." The new congregation rented a long narrow wooden building, painted yellow, on Pleasant Street, which—with a gallery for the women—would seat about 250, and hired the *hazan* who had caused the secession. There is a reference to both congregations in the Boston *Daily Journal* of that year (October 2, 1854): "The present is a most interesting season with the Jewish nation, being near the commencement of their New Year. Services are held at the synagogues . . . and they are thronged both at Matins and Vespers. The celebration of the Passover commences, we believe, tomorrow."

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Mishkan Israel (afterwards Mishkan Tefila) was organized in 1858, also by former members of Ohabei Shalom. In the program for the Purim Ball of Temple Mishkan Tefila in 1935 there is an advertisement by a restaurant serving "Chicken, Steak and Lobster Dinners," reading "where your Grandad and Grandmother wined and dined one hundred years ago." This may be doubted, for all the congregations were Orthodox.

In 1856 Ohabei Shalom had 120 members. Adath Israel had only seventeen members in 1859, but they purchased land for a cemetery that year: when one of their members had died the year before he had to be buried in Malden. At the beginning of 1860 the membership had grown to fifty; and it was generally agreed that this was because the congregation now owned a cemetery. Mishkan Israel had a hard time of it until 1870 when the congregation bought a place of worship on Ash Street. Both Ohabei Shalom and Adath Israel had religious schools. Adath Israel's was in a small room near the synagogue—across an alley. Here the children came three times a week to learn Hebrew and German; in 1863 there were twenty-six pupils. There had been an attempt in 1858 to organize a daily free school in which Hebrew and English were taught the Jewish children of the community, but it was abandoned after five years: Boston's excellent public schools, except for the fact that Saturday was also a school day, were more attractive.

There were about 125 Jewish families in Boston in 1851; by 1864 there were about 1600 Jewish residents, most of these from Germany. Simon Wolf lists 172 Jews from Massachusetts in Union regiments during the Civil War in his *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen.* Because of the hard times as a result of the war, Adath Israel, for example, had only $5.25 in its treasury in 1862. The membership had fallen to forty and that there might be enough for a *minyan* at the services, they were divided into groups of eight who were bound to attend: the *shammes* (sexton) and rabbi made up the requisite ten. But Ohabei Shalom had money enough and the patriotism to subscribe $120 in 1862 to a fund in aid of wounded soldiers.

Nathan Straus and twenty-six others in 1864 organized the United Hebrew Benevolent Association to grant some relief to those in need. The annual budget was no more than $500, assistance was limited to $2.00 a week, the needy called at the place of business of a member of the board, and what they got depended on how he felt just then. Hardly any records were kept, on the theory that the right hand should not know what the left was doing. But by 1876 matters were better organized: there were set hours for applicants and some investigation. In 1878 Lina Hecht, the wife of Jacob H. Hecht, then president of the United Hebrew Benevolent Association, organized the Hebrew Ladies Sewing Circle to supply the poor with clothing and blankets. Leopold Morse founded a home for aged Jews and needy Jewish children in 1888—the Leopold Morse Home for Aged and Infirm Hebrews and Orphanage.

Joseph Shoninger had been elected *hazan* of Adath Israel in 1856 to serve not only as reader but as teacher of the children—all for $200 a year. In 1874, although Reform Judaism had made a beginning in Germany sixty years or so before and was firmly established in a number of communities in the United States, the services of Adath Israel were still Orthodox. But that year, after almost twenty years of service, *Hazan* Shoninger had to resign and Rabbi Solomon Schindler succeeded him. Rabbi Schindler was elected, to use the words of the leader of the "Reform" movement in the synagogue, "to bring Judaism abreast with the time and to win for it the respect of the Gentile world."

According to Rabbi Schindler, "Reform" meant no more to its advocates in Adath Israel than "an orderly bearing of the worshippers during the hours of divine service." However, Rabbi Schindler managed to have family pews take the place of the old seating with the women in the balcony, a small organ was installed, a choir with a woman soprano hired, and a new prayer book with prayers in German used; the second days of holidays were no longer observed, the *shammes* became the "messenger," the *Schule* a "temple," and the rabbi delivered sermons regularly—at first in German. His suggestion that the men remove their hats was rejected at first as going too far.

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As it was, the changes met with much displeasure and fifteen of the fifty or so members of the congregation resigned—some to join Ohabei Shalom. But this congregation soon followed Adath Israel into the Reform movement. In 1871 a choir of men and women had been organized in Ohabei Shalom by the cantor, but after a year or two this had been abandoned for the traditional choir of boys. In 1875, however, the president of Ohabei Shalom, Israel Cohen, had the traditional seating of women in the gallery done away with for family pews—against the protest of many. In 1877 the choir of boys was replaced by a quartet. Confirmation of boys and girls at both Ohabei Shalom and Adath Israel took the place of the Orthodox rite of Bar Mitzvah for boys. (However, today boys are again Bar Mitzvah at Ohabei Shalom, the members of the congregation still wear hats during the services, there are daily services morning and evening, and, though Ohabei Shalom is affiliated with the Reform congregations in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the congregation uses Jastrow's prayer book instead of the Union Prayer Book.) In 1877 the first services in celebration of the American holiday of Thanksgiving were held in Adath Israel, in spite of the governor's proclamation calling for "praise to Almighty God" for "the fruits of the prosperous industry, for the intellectual, social, and civil benefactions, for the redemption of the world by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and for His Holy Word."

By this time, members of the community were beginning to be active in civic and national politics. Leopold Morse (b. Bavaria, 1831; d. Boston, 1892), who had been compelled to leave Germany in 1848 because of his small part in the movement of political rights, was among the first in American politics and urged others to join "in order to be worthy of the liberties which had been granted to them." He had been in the clothing business in New Bedford at first, but in 1851 moved his business to Boston. Here he became wealthy. He was elected to Congress as a Democrat in 1876 and served all five terms.

Leopold Morse's younger brother, Godfrey Morse (b. Bavaria, 1846; d. Dresden, 1911), was a lawyer. He was the first Jew of Boston to receive an A.B. degree from Harvard (1870). At Harvard, he had been an editor of the *Advocate* and manager of the first crew that went to England to row against Oxford (but this post has been scorned as nothing but a "water boy"). Elected a member of Boston's School Committee in 1875, he was afterwards assistant counsel of the United States before the commissioners judging the "Alabama" claims (1882-85), and was president of the Boston Common Council in 1883. He was the first president of the Boston Federation of Jewish Charities and also of the Elysium Club. Isaac Rosnosky (b. province of Posen, Prussia, 1846; d. Boston 1907) was the first Jew to serve on the Common Council (1878) and also the first Jew in the state legislature. He was re-elected time and again to both posts serving seven years on the council and five in the legislature. For a time he was assistant water commissioner of the city.

Before 1847, the German Jews of the community had organized a "Hebrew Literary Society." It met twice a week and had Jewish, German, and English periodicals on file. The Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, at first known as *Bundes Brüder*, was organized in New York in 1843 by twelve Jews from Germany. It had benefits and a secret ritual in which Abraham's staff as a shepherd, the tablets of Sinai, and "the chandelier of the Temple" were the chief symbols. There were several lodges of that order and of the Order B'rith Abraham in Massachusetts, and also those of rival orders. "For a number of years lodge matters were the topic of daily conversation among Boston Israelites," wrote Rabbi Schindler in 1889, not without a note of impatience. The wealthier Jews had their own social organizations of which the Elysium Club was the most noted. According to Rabbi Schindler, the club made a point of never celebrating Jewish holidays but only American holidays, such as Thanksgiving Day and Washington's Birthday.

In 1881, the Young Men's Hebrew Association was organized in the South End. It soon had about 400 members and was the center of Jewish life: all the lodges held their meetings in its rooms; even the Hebrew Ladies Sewing Circle met there; it had a gymnasium, classes in French and German, lectures and concerts, and ran an employment bureau.

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III

In 1881, with the beginning of the Russian pogroms, the great migration of Jews from Eastern Europe began, and one stream of it poured into Boston. In 1877 the number of Jews in Boston was estimated at 7,000. In 1894 it was estimated that the Jewish population of Boston was 20,000—14,000 of these immigrants living from hand to mouth. But these were not the only newcomers. In 1900, about a third of the residents of Boston, then a city of 560,892, had been born outside the United States; of the foreign-born, more than a third were Irish and about 7 per cent, or about 13,000, were said to be Jews. Furthermore, the parents of somewhat more than 72 per cent or 404,999 of the inhabitants of Boston, were of foreign birth: somewhat more than 44 per cent had both parents born in Ireland; almost 14 per cent had both parents born in Canada of English stock; 6.29 per cent had both parents born in Russia, and were chiefly Jews. Then there were those who had both parents born in Germany, Italy, England, Scotland, Sweden, or Poland—in this order.

None of the Jewish immigrants found their way into the almshouses: "... the most noticeable thing ... is the entire absence of Jews," wrote Frederick A. Bushee in 1903.* "...natives of the British Isles furnish a larger proportionate share of dependents (on public and private charity) than any others. Among the remaining foreign peoples in the city the Germans and Swedes represent the smallest proportion of dependents; the Jews are not far behind, and the Italians follow the Jews closely," wrote, in the same year, Winfield S. Alcott.†

The Irish, who began to come to Boston in the 1840's, originally settled in the North End, where wealthy Boston families had once lived. From there the Irish immigrants spread into the West End. The immigrant Jews also crowded into the North End and then into the West End and into the South End. The old buildings in the North End and in the West End were divided into flats, new rooms were added, and the cellars became stores. The mortgagees and landlords who found this swarm of immigrants looking for homes profitable were Yankees and Irish, but the workingmen who made the old buildings into warrens were Jews—the carpenters, the painters, the dealers in building materials, and so were the lawyers who wrote the mortgages that supplied the money. Wooden tenements for the immigrants were also built along the empty lots of South Boston and in the South End.

There were those who did not look kindly on these rows of new tenements as places to live in; nor did the "Jewish tenements" escape the notice of the literary sociologist Frederick Bushee, who, in the same article referred to above, says: "In the West End there is a peculiar type of Jewish tenements which were built primarily to rent, not to live in; but incidentally they serve as dwellings for many families. These dwellings are not always new. . . . Bay windows and fancy ornaments make them beautiful to look upon, while bells and speaking tubes raise them to the dignity of apartments. In fact, they look as though the Jews had put them through the old clothes process and they had come out 'cleaned, repaired, dyed, and pressed.'"

The immigrants did not find the mean streets of the poor neighborhoods as dreadful as they seemed to those who lived in better quarters. Many a Rebecca remembered long trips from the well with heavy pails of water in a Ukrainian city and here water flowed from the wall at the turn of a faucet or, at worst, from a pump in the yard. Mary Antin, for example, was favorably impressed by the brick pavement of the alley to which her father brought his family, for she knew the streets, deep in mud, of the Russian city in which they had lived. But, above all, they were in America, the land of free education and where all men, Jew and Christian alike, were equal—at least before the law. Many, too, knew the kindness of non-Jewish Bostonians: the Boston Provident Aid Society helped many, and a talented youngster like Mary Antin or Bernard Berenson—with his shock of thick hair, full mouth, pointed nose, and sharp eyes not unlike a young *quattrocento* painter himself—found not only patrons but friends.

Although the value of the new immigrants to the United States was recognized and the

*"Ethnic Factors of the Population of Boston," *Publications American Economic Association*, Vol. IV, No. 2, 3rd Series (May 1903), p. 85.

†"Immigration," *New England Magazine*, N.S. Vol. XXIX (Dec. 1903), p. 410.

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immigration welcomed (see, for example, the article by Alcott cited above), anti-Semitism among the vulgar might take pleasure in a circus parade through the streets of Boston—in the first decade of this century—that carried among the flags of the nations a replica of a dollar bill as the Jewish flag and among the learned might be found such a statement as appears in the Bushee study mentioned above: "It is a noticeable fact . . . that Jewish children are more acute than others in certain mathematical calculations. An example may appear complicated in the book, yet the suggestion 'How much do you make?' clears up the matter as though a new sense had been brought into play. Jewish children have the greatest contempt for their mates who get the gains mixed up with the losses in a business transaction."

Incidentally, a Jewish flag, designed by Jacob Baruch Askowith, had been displayed in Boston in 1891—probably for the first time in any modern country—at the dedication of a new assembly room by the B'nai Zion Educational Society. The flag had two horizontal blue stripes painted on a white cloth about a yard long; between the stripes was the "Shield of David" and in the center of the "Shield" the Hebrew letters for "Maccabee," also painted in blue.

It was not until 1892 that the legislature of the state granted Jewish ministers the right to perform marriages—a right that had been limited to preachers of the Gospel. The act also legalized marriages that had been performed by rabbis but declared illegal all divorces granted other than in a court of the state: its passage was due in no small measure to Isaac Rosnosky.

The immigrants that came to Boston after 1881 found in the North End an Orthodox synagogue known as Shomrei Shabbos, organized many years before. Its members had been chiefly peddlers who were away during the week and met only for services on the Sabbath—at each other's homes before they leased a room on Hanover Street. They had a burial ground in Dedham. Some time in the 70's, younger men, for the most part sons of members of Shomrei Shabbos, had organized another Orthodox congregation, Beth Abraham. The two congregations were united in 1886.

A few years afterwards, some members of Beth Abraham left it to form Beth Israel. The new congregation had a synagogue on Baldwin Place—the first synagogue in the North End. In 1893 this congregation and Beth Abraham were also united in one congregation for the same reason that Shomrei Shabbos and Beth Abraham had united: to have the burial ground in Dedham where the parents of many of the younger congregation were buried. The union was celebrated by a parade from Cockrel Hall at Hanover and Richmond Streets, where Beth Abraham used to meet on the top floor, to the Baldwin Place synagogue; the members carried the Scrolls of the Law and American, as well as Jewish, flags. One of the rabbis of the Baldwin Place synagogue was in a perpetual quarrel with "kosher" butchers whose zeal for *kashrut* was tempered by practical contingencies. After the wedding of his daughter, the dinner guests were taken sick, and it was said that the butchers were to blame. But the guests were better in the morning and the rabbi's dinner became one of the community's humorous tales.

The community's charitable work was still chiefly in the hands of the earlier immigrants—the German Jews. In 1889, Mrs. Lina Hecht organized the Hebrew Industrial School to train immigrant girls in cooking and sewing and to give them religious instruction: this became the Hecht Neighborhood House. She and her associates also organized "Country Camp" for girls and women. The first recreational program by a Jewish philanthropic agency of Boston was already in existence—"Poor Children's Parties": no false delicacy here.

The Benoth Israel Sheltering House was chartered in 1891 as a temporary shelter for immigrants (its building in the North End was bought in 1896); the Charitable Burial Association for immigrants was also organized in 1891, and the next year the Free Employment Bureau of the Baron de Hirsch Committee. In 1895, the Federation of Jewish Charities was organized to coordinate the work of Jewish charitable societies and do away with haphazard raising of funds: this was the first organization of the kind in the country among Jews. Rabbi Schindler was the first superintendent. The Federation had 489 subscribers the first year and they contributed $11,909 to its funds. The Jewish community now had institutional care for

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the aged and orphans, health and employment services, a program of recreation for the poor, and an attempt to coordinate the charitable work of the community.

The Mount Sinai Hospital Society opened the first Jewish out-patient clinic in 1902, particularly for immigrants unfamiliar with English. That year, too, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society was established in Boston.

The attitude of the German Jews toward the later East European immigrants was not lacking in sympathy. Yet the two groups got along none too well. The friction was not caused by the Polish and Russian immigrants' envy of the German Jews who, by this time, were for the most part completely Americanized and, oftener than not, in business for themselves. Nor was it due merely to irritation on the part of the German Jews at the dress and manners of the Polish and Russian immigrants that reminded the earlier immigrant (and the Gentiles) that he, too, was a Jew among Gentiles. But the German Jew did not like the stubborn interest of the Polish and Russian Jew in Yiddish. Then, although the economic theories of many a Russian Jew were not far from those of the German immigrant of 1848, such theories had become quite distasteful to the average German Jewish man of business in 1900. Again, the earlier immigrant, particularly if well-to-do, was generally a Reform Jew; the later immigrant was either zealously Orthodox or just as zealous against all religious rites and ceremonies. Even in their theories as to the proper way to help those in need, as Samuel C. Kohs has also pointed out in *The Jews*, earlier and later immigrants differed: the German Jew was ready to give; the Russian Jew favored loans without interest. When the later immigrants became established, they organized their own charitable institutions.

DURING the Spanish-American War, Samuel H. Borofsky (b. Lithuania, 1865), a member of the City Council in 1898 and of the state legislature in 1900, formed a Jewish company (6th Company, Provisional Militia): it had forty-six members on its roster. The war was over before it could be be mustered into Federal service. However, twenty-two Jews were in the 9th Massachusetts Regiment from Boston that fought at Santiago.

At the turn of the century, the community was beginning to have Jews who were American by birth and education. It was only to be expected that without the hardships and handicaps of the immigrant, a number of these would go far, and a number did. It may be sufficient to take only the names of three, although one of these, Kirstein, did not become a member of the community until 1911. The three were typical of Boston, particularly Boston's early Jewry, in that none was born there: Louis D. Brandeis (1856-1941) was born in Louisville, Kentucky; Edward A. Filene (1860-1937) was born in Salem, Massachusetts; and Louis E. Kirstein (1867-1942) in Rochester, New York.

Unlike men of similar eminence in any Jewish community, say, of Germany or Poland a century or so before, none of these three was noted for his formal piety. All were practical men and financially very successful. Filene made his father's little dry-goods shop with its single room—boasting a marble floor—one of the greatest stores in the country; Kirstein, after a successful career in business in Rochester, was Filene's associate; and Brandeis was an exceedingly able lawyer—how able only the lawyers who read his opinions when he was a member of the Supreme Court of the United States can judge: unrhetorical, clear, and solid.

The three were very much aware of their responsibilities as citizens. As others gave their money, so Brandeis gave his services to causes that he thought deserved them: for example, the sale of insurance by savings banks. Filene began to see business as a way of life: service to the community, and profit not the incentive as much as the proof of service. He advocated credit unions (small loans to members at low rates) and—though Brandeis, hating "bigness," thought the less of him for it—helped organize the United States Chamber of Commerce. Kirstein was chairman of the Boston Port Authority. He was president of the Boston Public Library—to which he gave a library on business and the building to house it. He endowed a chair of labor relations at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.

FILENE had "no interest—not the vaguest, in Judaism," to quote Jacob De Haas in the *Jewish Advocate*. Brandeis took no part, perhaps was not even interested, in Jewish

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affairs, until, well in his fifties, he became a Zionist in 1910. Kirstein, as soon as he felt himself secure in his business, took a leading part in Jewish philanthropy. In 1917 he was chairman of the newly organized Federated Jewish Charities of Boston; using the fund-raising technique of the Liberty Loan drives, the organization raised a quarter of a million dollars that year. On the other hand, the interest of Brandeis in his fellow Jews was that of the statesman, the philosopher, rather than that of the practical philanthropist.

With Emerson, Brandeis saw every man as "an omnibus on which all his ancestors are seated," although Brandeis could never create so striking an image. It was more characteristic of him to say as he did in his bread-and-butter way: "The phrase 'self-made man' is most misleading. We have power to mar, but we alone cannot make. The relatively large success achieved by Jews, wherever the door of opportunity was opened to them, is due, in the main . . . to this treasure which we have acquired by inheritance; and which we are in duty bound to transmit unimpaired, if not augmented, to coming generations." He justified his Zionism on the ground that "Jews collectively should likewise enjoy the same right and opportunity to live and develop as do other groups of people. This right of development on the part of the group is essential to the full enjoyment of rights by the individual." To Brandeis, this country was not a "melting-pot"; its future, he hoped, would continue to be "in differentiation, not in uniformity"; and he advocated a cultural pluralism or, as he preferred to call it, an "inclusive brotherhood." To think of Boston, he might have said, a Jew need not forget Jerusalem.

At the beginning of this century, the words "Jew" and "Jewish" and, of course, "Yiddish" were avoided, it seems, in the better circles of Boston. According to Bernard G. Richards, then a reporter for the Boston *Post*, that newspaper at the suggestion of A. Shuman—never Abraham Shuman but "A. Shuman"—who had a large clothing business in the center of the city, did not use the word "Jew" or "Jewish." In reporting a play in Yiddish, Mr. Richards had to describe it as "a Hebrew play." Thomas Wentworth Higginson, in his article on Boston in *Historic Towns of New England* (1898) wrote that "Foreign dialects have greatly increased within a few years" and that "the Italian population . . . makes itself very apparent to the ear, as does also latterly the Russian. Books and newspapers in this last tongue are always in demand." One can only suppose that Mr. Higginson meant "Yiddish" but was not rude enough to say so.

Several magazines and newspapers for the Jewish community had been published for a while—and were gone. In 1903, the *Jewish Advocate* was established and is being published to this day.

The newcomers were beginning to take root. There were twenty-one synagogues in Boston at the beginning of the century. And if there were Jews who put aside, if they could, what was left of their Jewishness, as they or their fathers had put aside prayer shawl and phylacteries, there would be others who, like sons of the earlier immigrants, were to bring to their activities as Jews the disciplined thinking that would win them eminence in business or the professions. Plain Jew or eminent, together with earlier immigrants and their descendants, the newcomers were to become a great Jewish community, American and part of Brandeis's "inclusive brotherhood": fifth in size among the Jewish communities of the country and numbering about 140,000 in 1950 (about 18 per cent of Boston's total population, and only the cities of New York (28 per cent) and Miami (24 per cent) with a greater percentage of Jews. But that is another chapter.

(See Lee M. Friedman's *Early American Jews, Jewish Pioneers and Patriots, Pilgrims in a New Land,* and his article in *Old-Time New England,* October 1948; *Early American Jewry* by Jacob Rader Marcus, Vol. 1; Oscar Handlin's *Boston's Immigrants; Fifty Years of Jewish Philanthropy* by Abraham K. Cohen; *The Story of Adath Israel* by Stella D. Obst; *Israelites in Boston* by Solomon Schindler; Aaron Pinkney's articles in the *Jewish Advocate,* April 14, 1949, September 22, 1949, and March 30, 1950 [with Joseph I. Gorfinkle]; "Louis D. Brandeis" by Louis E. Leventhal, *American Jewish Year Book 1942-43;* "Louis E. Kirstein" by Benjamin M. Selekman, *ibid., 1943-44;* Gerald White Johnson's *Liberal's Progress* [Edward A. Filene]. I am also indebted, for the quotation from John Adams, to Lucius Beebe's *Boston and the Boston Legend,* p. vii; to Oscar Handlin for the reason for Abraham Touro's appearance before the selectmen of Boston; and to Miss Fanny Goldstein of the Boston Public Library for other information.—C. R.)

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE WISDOM OF KOHELETH

Selections from a New Translation

ROBERT GORDIS

If Renan is to be believed, the Book of Ecclesiastes is the most charming book ever written by a Jew. For twenty centuries it has exerted a profound fascination upon readers. This, in spite of the fact that virtually every aspect of the book—date of composition, authorship, interpretation—has been the subject of wide differences of opinion.

Perhaps the chief difficulty has been the apparent contradictions in which the book abounds, the cool skepticism of one passage, followed by unimpeachable orthodox sentiments in the next. Was Koheleth (under which name the author hid his identity) talking with tongue in cheek, or writing a Socratic dialogue? Or perhaps, that last resort of the troubled reader, there was no Koheleth at all, as there was no Homer: a dozen uninspired scribes had each written a few verses, the sum total making up the Book of Ecclesiastes.

Modern critical scholarship tended, at least until recently, to regard the original core of the book as basically heterodox and unconventional. This authentic element was then subjected to wide and persistent interpolation by conventional readers of two types: the *Hasid*, or pietist, who added typical religious sentiments; and the *Hakam*, or sage, who glossed the text with conventional maxims of a practical cast.

Such labored theories are unnecessary if Koheleth is placed against the background of his age and read with sympathy and insight. At once a thoroughly credible, indeed fascinating personality emerges from his pages.

Koheleth was a Jewish sage who lived in Jerusalem during the period of the Second Temple. He was thoroughly grounded in the sacred writings of Judaism extant in his time, particularly the Torah and the Prophets. But essentially Koheleth was a devotee of *Hokmah*, or Wisdom, the most secular branch of Hebrew culture. *Hokmah* was concerned with all the practical arts and technical skills required for success in the world. It was cultivated in special academies for upper-class youth, whom it taught a safe and sane, positive morality. Its medium was a special literary genre, the *Mashal* (parable or proverb). This practical, or lower, Wisdom was cultivated for centuries throughout the lands of the Fertile Crescent—Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Babylonia; one finds it in the Book of Proverbs in the Bible and in Ben Sira, or Ecclesiasticus, in the Apocrypha.

Among the many preceptors of Wisdom were some restless minds who refused to be satisfied with these practical goals, but sought to penetrate to the great abiding issues: the meaning of life, the purpose of creation, the nature of death, the mystery of evil. Like so many rationalist minds since their day, however, they found the unaided human reason incapable of solving these ultimate issues. Some, no doubt, finally made their peace with the traditional Judaism of their day. But others, more tough-minded, refused to take on faith what their reason could not demonstrate. Hence their writings reveal various degrees and types of skepticism and heterodoxy, and not a little of pioneering thought. Several of these devotees of the higher or speculative Wisdom transmuted the frustration and pain of their quest into some of the world's greatest masterpieces, notably the books of Job and Koheleth.

Koheleth was moved by three things at the beginning of his career—the love of life, the quest for justice in the world, and the search for truth. But the easy optimism of youth turned to ashes for him in maturity, as he learned that justice was rare, and the ultimate truth about life and death, God and the universe, beyond man's ken. Only the first goal, the enjoyment of the world, remained. With

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this impulse as his basis, Koheleth undertook to construct a philosophy of life.

All that is certain is that man has an innate desire for happiness. Since God has created man, He has also created this impulse. It thus becomes clear that God's fundamental purpose for mankind is the furthering of man's pleasure. To put it another way: Koheleth's morality recognizes the pursuit of happiness as the goal; his metaphysics postulates the existence of God; his religion is a combination of both.

That Koheleth has not been understood is due to several aspects of his style. For one thing, Koheleth was struggling to use Hebrew for quasi-philosophic purposes, a use to which the language had not previously been put. Then there is the admixture in his Hebrew of Aramaic idioms and expressions. Even more important, however, are two hitherto unregarded elements of his style: his use of a traditional religious vocabulary to express his own unconventional ideas and the various highly original ways in which he employs proverbial quotations. Sometimes Koheleth quotes a proverb simply because he agrees with it, elaborating on it with a characteristic comment. Frequently, however, his comment subtly changes the proverb's meaning, shifting the ground of the discussion from the realm of the matter of fact and practical to the uncharted regions where speculation and skepticism have free rein. Often Koheleth will cite a proverb that expresses a widely accepted point of view, and then subtly register his disagreement, not in lengthy argument, but by citing another utterance that contradicts the first. In each pair of contrasting proverbs the latter represents his opinion.

From all that has been said, it is clear that the Book of Koheleth is not a debate, a dialogue, or a philosophical treatise. It is best described as a *cahier,* or notebook, in which the author jots down his reflections during the enforced leisure of old age.

For a detailed study of Koheleth, the reader is referred to the present writer's *Koheleth—The Man and His World* (Jewish Theological Seminary of America). This commentary on Ecclesiastes also contains a new translation of the text. The following selections and introductory comments are taken from this work.

I

The processes of nature, holds Koheleth, are part of a ceaseless and changeless cycle, without goal or meaning. Nothing new ever happens. Viewed against the background of the universe, all man's striving is folly.—(1:1-11)

VANITY of vanities, says Koheleth, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

What profit has a man of all his toil beneath the sun? One generation goes and another comes, but the earth is forever unchanged. The sun rises and the sun sets, breathlessly rushing towards the place where it is to rise again. Going to the south and circling to the north, the wind goes round and round, and then returns upon its tracks. All the rivers flow into the sea, but the sea is never full; to the place where the rivers flow, there they continue to flow. All things are tiresome, one cannot put them into words, and so the eye is never satisfied with seeing nor the ear filled with hearing.

What has been will be, and what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. There may be something of which a man says, "Look, this is new!" It has already occurred in the ages before us. For there is no recollection left of the earliest generations, and even the later ones will not be remembered by those who come at the very end.

II

KOHELETH adopts the role of King Solomon in order to test the value of wisdom and wealth, for both of which Solomon was famous.

His first experiment is with wisdom. It leads him to the conclusion that the search for truth is futile and calculated only to make men miserable.

He then turns to physical pleasure, to the joys that wealth can bring, spacious gardens and elaborate mansions, wine, women, and song. For a space, he finds satisfaction in the novelty of sensation and the joy of activity, but it soon wears off. Pleasure is no more satisfactory than wisdom.

Koheleth concludes that the wise man has no advantage over the fool, nor the diligent worker over the sluggard. To cap it all, when a man dies, after a lifetime of toil, some stranger whom he may not even know inherits after him. The only sensible goal that remains is the quest for "joy," however inadequate it may be by any absolute standard.—(1:12-2:26)

I KOHELETH was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I applied my mind to search out and explore in my wisdom all that happens beneath the sky—a sorry business it is that God has given men to be afflicted with.

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I have seen all the works that are done under the sun and behold, all is vanity and chasing of wind, a crookedness not to be straightened, a void not to be filled.

Said I to myself, Here I have greatly increased my wisdom, beyond all those who were before me over Jerusalem, for my heart has attained much wisdom and knowledge. But as I applied my mind, I learnt that wisdom and knowledge are madness and folly. Yes, I perceived that this, too, is chasing after wind. For the more wisdom the more grief, and increasing one's knowledge means increasing one's pain.

Then I said to myself, "Come, let me try you out in joy and enjoy pleasure," but this, too, was vanity. Of laughter I said, "It is folly," and of joy, "What good is it?" For I had explored the matter with my mind, by stimulating my body with wine (while my mind was acting with wisdom) and by taking hold of frivolity, so that I might see what course is best for men under the sky during the brief span of their lives.

I acted in grand style, I built mansions for myself and planted vineyards. I laid out gardens and parks, and planted in them every kind of fruit-tree. I made pools of water, to water a forest of trees. I bought slaves, both male and female, though I already had a large household. I also owned much cattle and sheep, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. I also amassed silver and gold, and the treasures of kings and provinces. I acquired singers and songstresses, all the delights of men, of mistresses a goodly number. So I grew great and added to my possessions beyond all who had been before me in Jerusalem, while my wisdom remained with me. Whatever my eyes desired, I did not deny them; I did not deprive myself of any pleasure—for my soul rejoiced in all my labor, and that was my reward for all my labor.

I then turned to observe all the work that my hands had done, and all the labor I had strained to perform and lo, everything was vanity and chasing of wind, with no advantage under the sun.

Once again I saw that wisdom is but madness and folly, for of what value is a man coming after the king, who can only repeat what he has already done?

I have heard it said: "Wisdom excels folly as the light is better than darkness"; "The wise man has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness." But I know that one fate overtakes them both! So I said to myself, The fate of the fool will befall me too. Why, then, have I become so extremely wise and I said to myself that this, too, is vanity. For the wise man is no more remembered than the fool, in the multitude of coming days everything is forgotten. Yet how can the wise man die like the fool! Hence I hated life, for all the work done beneath the sun seemed worthless to me, and everything vanity and chasing of wind.

And I hated all my wealth on which I was toiling under the sun, which I must leave to the man coming after me, not knowing whether he would be wise or a fool. Yet he would rule over all my possessions, upon which I had spent my effort and skill under the sun. Indeed this is vanity! So I turned to rid my heart of any illusions concerning all the work on which I had labored under the sun. For here is a man who has labored with knowledge and skill, yet he must leave his portion to a man who has not toiled over it—surely that is vanity and a great evil. For what good does a man derive from all the labor and thought he expends under the sun? During all his days, pain and grief are his lot, and even at night his mind is not at rest—that too is vanity.

There is no greater good for man than eating and drinking and giving himself joy in his labor. Indeed, I have seen that this is from the hand of God, for who can enjoy a pleasure or abstain, except it be by His Will? To the man God favors He gives wisdom, knowledge and joy, but to the "sinner" He assigns the task of gathering and amassing, only to hand it over at last to the man who is pleasing to God. Indeed, this is vanity and chasing of wind!

III

THE spectacle of wickedness in the seats of justice and the fruitless tears of the oppressed fill Koheleth's heart with despair. Nor can he find consolation in the shadowy doctrine of retribution in another world, which he dismisses with a shrug of the shoulders. Only the pursuit of personal happiness is a sensible goal for men.—(3:16-4:3)

FURTHERMORE, I saw under the sun that in the place of judgment there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness,

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wrong. I said to myself, "Both the righteous and the wicked God will judge, for there is a proper time for everything and every deed—over there!" I said to myself concerning men, "Surely God has tested them and shown that they are nothing but beasts." For the fate of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As the one dies, so does the other, for there is one spirit in both and man's distinction over the beast is nothing, for everything is vanity. All go to one place, all come from the dust and all return to the dust. Who knows whether the spirit of men rises upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth? So I saw that there is nothing better for man than to rejoice in his works, for that is his lot, and no one can permit him to see what shall be afterwards.

Again I saw all the acts of oppression that are done under the sun. Here are the tears of the oppressed, with none to comfort them; and power in the hands of their oppressors, with none to comfort them. So I praise the dead who already have died, more than the creatures who are still alive. And more fortunate than both is he who has not yet been born and so has never seen the evil deeds that are being done under the sun.

IV

KOHELETH reflects on the "golden mean," the Aristotelian principle of ethics with which he has become familiar. He urges it, however, from his own vantage point: extremes of both saintliness and wickedness lead to unhappiness.

As always, the ideas are couched in typical religious terminology. "Reverencing God" means fulfilling His purpose by seeking the happy life. Folly and wickedness are synonymous for Koheleth, as for all the Wisdom teachers, though his views of what folly means differ from theirs. He again reminds his readers that his conclusions are based on reason and sound observation.—(7:15-25)

I HAVE seen everything during my vain existence, a righteous man being destroyed for all his righteousness and a sinner living long for all his wickedness. Hence do not be righteous overmuch nor be overzealous for wisdom—why be left desolate? Neither be overly "wicked," nor be a fool—why die before your time? Far better it is to grasp the one and hold fast to the other, for he who reverences God will do his duty by both! Be not a fool, for it has been well said, "Wisdom gives a wise man strength greater than ten rulers who are in the city." Nor be overly righteous, for it has been observed, "There is no man on earth always in the right, who does the proper thing and never errs."

Pay no attention to every word that is spoken, lest you hear your own slave reviling you. Besides, you know very well that many times you have reviled others.

All this I tested concerning Wisdom. I thought I could become wise, but it is much beyond me. Far away is all that has come into being and very, very deep; who can find it? With all my heart I turned to learn, explore and seek after wisdom and thought, and I saw that wickedness is foolishness, and folly is madness.

V

FOR all its frustrations, life remains the central good in the world. After death all activity and sensation are ended—and even during life unknown perils lurk along the way. All the more reason why man should enjoy life while he can with all the vigor and zest at his command.—(9:4-12)

HE WHO is attached to all the living still has hope, for surely a live dog is better than a dead lion! The living know at least that they will die, but the dead know nothing, nor have they any reward, for their memory is forgotten. Their loves, their hates, their jealousies, all have perished—no longer have they a share in all that is done under the sun.

Go, then, eat your bread with joy,
And drink your wine with a glad heart,
For God has already approved your actions.
At all times let your clothes be white,
And oil on your head not be lacking.
Enjoy life with the woman whom you love,
Through all the vain days of your life,
Which God has given you under the sun,
Throughout your brief days,
For that is your life's reward
For your toil under the sun.

Whatever you are able to do, do with all your might, for there is neither action nor thought nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave towards which you are moving.

Again I saw that beneath the sun the race

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is not to the swift, nor the battle to the brave, nor is bread won by the wise, nor wealth by the clever, nor favor by the learned, for time and accident overtake them all. Though man does not know his hour, like fish caught in an evil net, like birds seized in a snare, so men are trapped in an hour of misfortune, when it falls upon them suddenly.

VI

In the closing section, Koheleth rises to heights of eloquence that equal and surpass the majestic opening. In impassioned phrases he repeats that it is God's will that man be happy. The time for joy is youth, when our faculties are unimpaired. It is then that man must seek his happiness, before old age sets in, with its burdens of debility and failing powers.

The book closes with a moving "Allegory on Old Age," in which the tragedy of man's progressive deterioration is graphically described.—(11:7-12:8)

Sweet is the light,
And good for the eyes to see the sun!
For if a man live many years,
Let him rejoice in them all,
And remember that the days of darkness will be many,
And that everything thereafter is nothingness.

Rejoice, young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in your youthful days.
Follow the impulses of your heart
And the desires of your eyes,
And know that for all this,
God will call you to account.

Banish sadness from your heart,
And remove sorrow from your flesh,
For childhood and youth are a fleeting breath.

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth,
Before the evil days come and the years draw near,
Of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them."
Before the sun grows dark,
And the light of the moon and the stars,
And the clouds return after the rain.

In the day when the watchmen of the house tremble,
And the strong men are bent,
The grinding maidens cease, for they are few,
And the ladies peering through the lattices grow dim.

When the doubled doors on the street are shut,
And the voice of the mill becomes low.
One wakes at the sound of a bird,
And all the daughters of song are laid low.
When one fears to climb a height,
And terrors lurk in a walk.

When the almond-tree blossoms,
*The grasshopper becomes a burden,**
And the caper-berry can no longer stimulate desire.
So man goes to his eternal home,
While the hired mourners walk about in the street. . . .

Before the silver cord is severed,
And the golden bowl is shattered,
The pitcher is broken at the spring,
And the wheel is shattered at the pit.
The dust returns to the earth as it was,
And the spirit returns to God, who gave it.

Vanity of vanities, says Koheleth, all is vanity.

*Apparently an allusion to the decline of sexual vitality.

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ON THE HORIZON

RAMADAN SUNDOWN WITH MODERN IMPROVEMENTS

Science Triumphs in the Near East, Too

RAY ALAN

EVERY self-respecting Moslem town possesses a cannon which is fired daily at sunset during the month of Ramadan. Sundown brings to an end the strict abstinence from food, drink (even water), and tobacco which must be observed during the daylight hours of Ramadan, and the cannon-shot is the signal for immediate indulgence in joyful and often gargantuan feasting. In towns where there is a radio station the firing of the cannon will generally be broadcast.

It happened, one evening of Ramadan, that I was being shown round the radio station of an important Near Eastern town when this was done. The musical program suddenly faded out and an announcer seemed to ad-lib something. The control operator did an obscure conjuring trick on his switchboard.

"We are now blugged through to our microphone in the citadel to bick ub the cannon," an official said.

I asked how they knew exactly when the cannon was going to be fired. "Does someone ring you up from the citadel to warn you or do you just watch the sun and use your own judgment?"

"We don't know exactly," the official replied, "but it doesn't matter. We don't have to be accurate. As a general rule we like to switch through a few minutes before sunset so as to have a short beriod of silence immediately before the cannon-shot. We keeb a casual eye on the sun."

"And who actually gives the word for the cannon to be fired?"

The official shrugged. "There is a mosque beside the citadel. I imagine the Imam there gives the signal."

A rattle of cannon-shot leaped out of the control room loudspeaker as we opened the door to leave. A moment later a duller crump reached us through the listless air.

"Our listeners hear the cannon first," the official laughed. "They can break their fast or have a smoke a second or two earlier than everyone else." He lit a cigarette himself, breathing in the blue smoke gratefully. Urchins were cheering in some far-off street and throwing firecrackers. The minarets of the town stood out suddenly in garlands of fairy lights, and loudspeakers began to boom. "The Muezzin have got lazy," he went on. "Instead of bearing witness to the glory of God with the windbibes He brovided for the burbose they croon into microphones nowadays like sick cabaret girls. As if a minaret were no more than a bole stuck into the air to hang loudspeakers on. . . . That's the sort of thing the West is doing to us. The mob think it's wonderful, of course,

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MODERN science and technology meet with ancient Islamic tradition in this little tale of the Mysterious Near East, where all confusions resolve themselves at last in the Ultimate Unity. RAY ALAN is a British journalist who has written on the Near East for COMMENTARY and various English publications. His most recent contribution to our pages was "Palace Politics in the Damascus Oasis" (February 1953).

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and young men would no more dream of going to a mosque without loudspeakers—on the rare occasions they do visit one—than of batronizing a café that does not sell Coca-Cola."

THE following morning I found myself in the vicinity of the citadel, and on a sudden impulse climbed up to the dusty, crumbling rampart on which the Ramadan cannon stood. It was an ancient Turkish piece that must have killed, in its heyday, at least as many friends as enemies. One of its wheels was missing and sandbags were wedged at strategic points around its base; but even in this maimed and shackled state it shied like a startled mule, said the man in charge of it, when fired. He was stuffing into the muzzle of the cannon a stiff, heavy, doughy mixture of clay, chaff, and small stones, in readiness for the evening volley. He showed me a length of the slow-burning fuse with which he set off the charge. He lit it, he said rather insistently, as if to stress that he personally was a modernist and had little use for the fast, from the glowing end of his cigarette; and he was in the act of taking out a packet of cigarettes when we were joined by the Imam of the nearby mosque who had strolled over to inspect the preparations.

Yes, the Imam said, it was he who gave the signal for the cannon to be fired. His own authority was sufficient, really; but as this was an important town, with its own theological institute whose sheikhs liked to be consulted on such matters and in order to avoid error, he did in fact pay the sheikhs the compliment of awaiting their word before authorizing the cannon-shot. They telephoned him every evening during Ramadan at the appropriate moment.

A DAY or two later I had an opportunity of raising the matter with one of the sheikhs. He told me that ocular evidence of sunset is generally good enough (ideally one should have two independent witnesses of good character) but to obtain independent confirmation and lessen the risk of accident, for Ramadan falls in winter every so often and the sky may be cloudy, it is permissible to utilize the resources of modern science. Would God have given man science if it could not be used in His service? The sheikhs had, therefore, a long-standing arrangement whereby the department of natural history at the University rang them up every evening of Ramadan a few minutes before it was time for the cannon to go off. They never authorized the Imam to go ahead until they got this call.

There was an American in charge of the natural history counter at the university. He told me it was a predecessor—and compatriot—of his who had made the original agreement with the sheikhs so as to win their good will and offset their natural suspicion of his subject. It was, apparently, this same talented predecessor who had coined, and sold to the sheikhs, that very phrase about the use of science in God's service which had been quoted to me. Up to a few years ago, he continued, he had looked up sunset time daily throughout Ramadan in *Whitaker's Almanack,* making the necessary adjustment for longitude. He used to set his alarm clock to ring five minutes before sunset every day to remind him to call the sheikhs.

Nowadays the town had a fairly reliable telephone system and he got the exchange to ring him every evening before sunset. It saved him time and trouble and worked efficiently. He supposed the people at the exchange used *Whitaker's,* too.

THE telephone exchange was staffed mainly by Armenian girls. The supervisor said that in view of the importance of this daily Ramadan duty she had passed on to the Ministry of Communications the task of estimating at what time she should ring the University. The Minister had at first refused to accept this responsibility and the cabinet crisis that followed shook the whole Middle East. A compromise had finally been reached whereby the Minister farmed out the task, on contract, to the local observatory, his department's responsibilities being

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limited to those of intermediary between observatory and telephone exchange.

The observatory was financed and operated by an elderly Frenchman. *Ah, oui: cette histoire de canon.* . . . When he first undertook the duty he used to work out sunset time to the split second every day, but it soon became a bore. He noticed that, by a useful coincidence, the local radio station faded out its program five minutes before the cannon-shot. He supposed they had everything worked out very carefully there, radio being such a matter of timing. So now, as sunset approached, he turned on his radio. Immediately the local station faded out he rang the Ministry of Communications and told them to pass on the news that the cannon could be fired in five minutes' time. . . .

Was it not, he asked as he set out two glasses, a perfect arrangement?

EXODUS IN SPRING

PAMELA MELNIKOFF

DEATH came to Pharaoh's Egypt with the spring.
Years afterwards, the first warm, lingering day
Still made his people mourn, remembering
How April snatched their first-born sons away.

Death came to Egypt with the early showers—
Unheralded—and like a beggar crept
Along the highways, through the opening flowers,
Plundering serfs and princes as they slept.

And watchful Israel, saddled to await
The dawn departure, heard a dreadful cry
Borne on the winds, and paused beside the gate
That opened to the East, and wondered why. . . .

But soon the horror faded, and the night
Lay far behind in Egypt. It was day.
The blossoming trees hung out their clouds of light
Against the blue, and sped them on their way.

On, on they journeyed, till once more they came
To the dark shores of night. And at that hour
God came to guide them with a torch of flame
That spread gold petals like an April flower.

PAMELA MELNIKOFF is a member of the staff of the London *Jewish Chronicle,* and has contributed poetry and other writing to various British publications.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE COLONIAL SYSTEM OF THE U.S.S.R.

Soviet Communism and the Backward Peoples

HUGH SETON-WATSON

IT IS a commonplace that the Hapsburg Empire fell because its rulers could not satisfy the conflicting claims of its nationalities. It is less widely known that the Soviet Union is a multi-national state. Of its 200 million inhabitants nearly half are not Russians. According to Communist propaganda their mutual relations are a happy friendship and brotherhood, such as cannot even be imagined where Western landowners, capitalists, and imperialists hold sway. The miracle can be achieved only in "the land of socialism," where all alike bask in the sunshine diffused by the scientific healer of nationalist passions, the teacher of genius of all progressive humanity.

So profound is Western ignorance of the Soviet nationalities, so great the desire of Western people to find some good in the Soviet system, that this propaganda picture has long passed for reality in the West. Only recently have independent Western writers begun to study this subject. In Professor Edward Hallett Carr's *A History of Soviet Russia, 1917-1923* (which is Vol. 1 of his *Bolshevik Revolution,* published by Macmillan), there is a valuable summary of Soviet doctrine on national problems. Several studies have appeared by American and British scholars on particular national problems at particular periods. Periodicals and pamphlets published by exiles from the Soviet Union contain material on recent history. (For example, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920,* by John S. Reshetar, put out by Princeton University Press. Of the various periodicals issued by exiles of the Soviet nationalities I have found the most useful factual material in *Türkeli,* which is published in Munich.) The most serious attempt at a general survey is the recent book by Walter Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies,* published by Frederick A. Praeger (New York, 334 pp., $6.00).

For those who wish to understand Soviet nationality policy, and its bearing on both Soviet foreign policy and the action of Communist parties in Asia, Mr. Kolarz is a learned, level-headed, and reliable guide on a subject of great practical importance for both statesmen and public opinion in the West. Here only a few main features of the problem can be noted.

MOSCOW'S treatment of the non-Russian nationalities varied, during the successive phases of the Soviet regime, in much the same way as its treatment of its subjects as a whole. In the first months of the Bolshevik dictator-

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PERHAPS no theme of Communist propaganda, as HUGH SETON-WATSON here points out, has withstood so well the disillusionment of Communist practice as the claim that in Soviet Russia a great number of national groups are encouraged to pursue an independent cultural life. On the basis of recent research into Soviet nationalities policy, Professor Seton-Watson, Professor of Russian History in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies of the University of London, here points out how far this claim has diverged from Soviet reality, and reveals the true shape and motivations of Soviet nationalism and colonialism as they absorb and dominate subject peoples both at home and abroad. Professor Seton-Watson was born in 1916 and educated at Winchester and Oxford. He is the author of *Eastern Europe Between the Wars* (1945), *The East European Revolution* (1950), and *The Decline of Imperial Russia* (1952); and most recently of a series of notable articles in *The Twentieth Century* assessing Central and Eastern European perspectives in the cold war.

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ship the nationalities, like the workers and the peasants, were offered a paradise of freedom and happiness. During the civil war, non-Russian political groups were alternately supported as popular movements, or persecuted as bourgeois reactionaries, according to the needs of the military situation. In the years of NEP a measure of self-government was allowed to the nationalities, within the framework of the over-all Bolshevik dictatorship. At this time official doctrine abhorred equally the two "deviations" of "Great Russian chauvinism" and "local bourgeois nationalism," but in practice the central government denounced the first more severely than the second. This official emphasis was, however, differently obeyed or disregarded in different areas. In the Ukraine it was carried out: the Bolshevik rulers of the Ukrainian SSR were to some extent Ukrainian home rulers as well as Bolsheviks. In Central Asia it was ignored: the exponents of Communism in Turkestan were almost all Russians, and "Soviet power" meant power of Russian bureaucrats over Turkish or Iranian peasants.

THE first Five Year Plan brought a fierce onslaught on self-government in all non-Russian areas. The chief sufferer was the Ukraine. The first purge of Ukrainian "bourgeois nationalists" occurred in 1930. Three years later, when the death from starvation of several million Ukrainian peasants, caused by Moscow's policy of forcible collectivization and requisitions, inflamed Ukrainian nationalist feeling against Moscow, a bigger purge swept away many leading Ukrainian Communists. The most eminent, the Commissar for Education, Skrypnik, anticipated arrest by suicide. In Central Asia, collectivization caused mass famine among the nomad herdsmen: a comparison of the census figures of 1926 and 1939 shows that about 1,500,000 Kazaks, some 40 per cent of the whole Kazak nation, "disappeared" during this period. Of the comparatively small number of Central Asians who occupied leading positions in the Communist parties many were removed by the drive against "bourgeois nationalism" in the early 1930's. At the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist party in 1934, Stalin himself laid down that local nationalism was in many areas a more dangerous "deviation" than Great Russian chauvinism. This change of emphasis has remained valid to the present time.

The monster purge of 1937-38—the *Yezhovshchina*—involved a massacre of the leading Communists of the nationalities. In the Ukraine, Postyshev, the organizer of the 1933 purge, himself succumbed, together with all nine members of the Ukrainian Politburo, all 12 members of the Ukrainian Council of Commissars, and 45 out of 57 members of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist party. In the Transcaucasian SSR's and the North Caucasian ASSR's about 4 per cent of the population were arrested, and all leading Communists disappeared except Stalin's two faithful henchmen, the Georgian Beria and the Azerbaijani Bagirov, who have survived to the present day. In Central Asia, too, a clean sweep was made. The Uzbek Communist leaders, Hodzhaev and Ikramov, figured in the show trial of Bukharin in 1938: the Communist leaders of the other Central Asian SSR's disappeared without publicity. A further stage was reached during the Second World War. The Volga Germans, some 400,000 strong, were deported from their homes already in 1941. Later on the principle was established that if the authorities considered that a large number of members of any national group had helped the German invaders, or even had showed insufficient enthusiasm for the Soviet war effort, then the whole nation should be deported from its homeland to an unknown destination in the interior of the Soviet Union. This fate overtook the Tatars of the Crimea, the Kalmucks of the Caspian steppes, and the Karachai, Chechen, and Ingush peoples of the North Caucasus.

The manner of the deportation of the Chechen nation recalls the infamous Massacre of Glencoe of 1691, usually regarded as one of the blackest episodes in British history. Like the Campbell troops in Glencoe, the Russian MVD troops came to the Chechen mountain villages as friends, and were received as friends in Chechen houses. After they had been there some weeks came Red Army Day, February 23, 1944. The troops celebrated the occasion by songs and dances in the village squares. The villagers assembled to watch them. In the middle of the festivities orders were suddenly given to arrest all male civilians. On the following days, large numbers of the men were shot, and the rest, together with their women and children, were herded into lorries and transported to the railway. There they were packed into trucks and slowly removed, in the Russian winter, to their distant destinations.

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Accounts of refugees, who had seen Chechen deportees in Central Asia at a later date, suggest that about half died of hunger, exposure, and disease during the journey. The scattered survivors have no schools or press in their own language. More than half a million Chechens have been destroyed as a nation.

THE triple centralization of the political bureaucracy, the economic planning hierarchy, and the Communist party, reinforced by the purges of the 1930's and the postwar repression, have destroyed any vestige of national self-government that existed in the 1920's. This is true of the whole of the Soviet Union. The worst effects are felt, however, in the more backward areas, such as Central Asia. As even less is known in the West about these areas than about the Ukraine or the Baltic Republics, it may be well here to devote a little space to them.

Since 1929, industrialization has made gigantic strides in Asiatic Russia. But its benefits to the local nationalities are doubtful. The growth of such industrial centers as Ufa, Karaganda, and Tashkent has provided Bashkirs, Kazaks, and Uzbeks with jobs as unskilled laborers: the skilled workers and the engineers are Russian, and to a lesser extent Ukrainians, Armenians, or Georgians, imported from outside. During the first Five Year Plan thousands of uprooted Kazaks and Bashkir nomads were forced to work in the new industrial plants in the Urals. Appalling living conditions, unfamiliar climate, and moral bewilderment caused by the sudden destruction of their traditional way of life all contributed to their very high death rate.

Since 1929 the agricultural production of Central Asia has been reorganized in the interest of Moscow. The Moscow planners have needed cotton, and Central Asia is the most suitable part of the Soviet Union to produce it. Therefore the Central Asian peasants, forced into collective farms at great cost in human lives, and still greater cost in livestock, were ordered by Moscow to grow cotton. Food grains were to be imported from European Russia or Siberia. Thereby the weapon of hunger was placed in Moscow's hands to bend the people of Turkestan to its will. The British have often been criticized for encouraging cotton production at the expense of grain in Egypt. But at least the Egyptian cotton-grower has had a better price than he would have had for grain, and no British government ever considered withholding grain from Egypt in order to starve Egypt into submission. Egyptian politicians were able to denounce British imperialism in general, and cotton policy in particular. But Uzbek politicians who resisted Moscow's agricultural plans for Uzbekistan were "unmasked as bourgeois nationalists" and paid the supreme penalty.

Both industrial development and agricultural changes have brought an influx of Russians into Central Asia, as industrial experts and as farmers. Between 1926 and 1939, the proportion of Kirghiz in the Kirghiz Republic fell from about 67 per cent to 50 per cent. In 1938, less than a quarter of the students at the university of Kazakstan, in Alma Ata, were Kazaks. Undoubtedly many new schools, high schools, and universities have been created in Central Asia since the revolution, but they are designed principally for the Russian colonists. The great majority of industrial specialists and political administrators in Central Asia are Russians. The members of the Councils of Ministers of the SSR's are usually Asians, with the significant exceptions of the Ministers of State Security. But the heads of departments within the ministries are usually Russians. The First Secretaries of the Communist party at the republican and provincial level are usually Asians, but the Second Secretaries, and in most cases also the party secretaries in charge of propaganda, are Russians. The real business of government and party is done by these Russians, who communicate directly with their superiors in Moscow, by-passing their nominal Asian chiefs.

Soviet policy has been based from an early stage on the old principle of "divide and rule." In this it shows itself the heir to imperial Russian policy. Already at the turn of this century, the Volga Tatars, socially and culturally the most advanced of the Russian Moslems, were gaining influence among their co-religionists. Tatars provided a large part of the intelligentsia of Moslem Russia, and used their influence to strengthen the notion of the unity of all Russian Moslems, and especially of those who spoke Turco-Tatar languages. The imperial authorities resisted them, not only by repressive measures, but also by doing all they could to stress differences of dialect or of social customs between individual Moslem groups. The Soviet regime has developed this practice more "scientifically." Dialects are mag-

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nified into languages, tribes and nations, Tatars and Bashkirs are treated as two nations. In the 1920's the Khanates of Bokhara and Khiva were abolished, and together with the previous Russian administrative units of Turkestan were reshaped into five Republics—Turkomen, Uzbek, Kazak, Kirghiz, and Tajik—which in due course became fully fledged SSR's. Since then these "nations" have been kept as separate from each other as possible. All are encouraged to have close contact with Moscow, but little if any with each other. The Soviet government's motive was not solicitude for the ethnical purity of the Central Asian "nations," but simply the desire to divide in order the better to dominate.

It is doubtful how successful the Soviet rulers have been in their attempt to denationalize the peoples of the Union, to reduce them to a common denominator of *homo sovieticus*. One effect of industrialization has been to create a more numerous Asian intelligentsia. Though education in Asiatic Russia serves principally the local Russians, Asians too make use of it. Though the proportion of educated persons among the Asians is much lower than among the Russians, it is much higher than it was among the Asians before 1929. Moscow hopes that these educated Asians will be won over by the regime which has given them their opportunity, that they will become the exponents of Moscow's policy among their own people. It is probable that those Asians who enter the upper caste of Soviet society are treated as equals by their Russian fellow-members of the caste. There is no color bar in Soviet Russia, and there was none even in imperial Russia.

But the problem is not so simple as that. In pre-1914 Hungary, Slovaks or Serbs or Rumanians who rose through the Hungarian education system were able to pursue careers without suffering discrimination, provided that they regarded themselves not as Slovaks or Serbs or Rumanians, but as Hungarians. Yet as education became more widespread, the number of educated Slovaks and Serbs and Rumanians who insisted on retaining their original nationality, and devoting their talents and skill to the service of their own nation in its struggle against political domination by the Hungarians, steadily grew. In France there is no color bar against colonials who have attained higher education. Yet the French-educated intellectuals of Vietnam, Tunis, Madagascar, or the Ivory Coast have tended increasingly to act not as exponents of French policy among their own people, but as champions of their own peoples' national movements against the French.

It is difficult to believe that the same is not the case with the Asian intellectuals in the Soviet Union. They cannot be unaware of the appalling sufferings of their own peoples. That they should be indifferent to these sufferings would be a contradiction of the experience of all colonial empires of the 19th and 20th centuries. Such facts as are available from Soviet Asia give the opposite impression. There is evidence that, despite persecution and propaganda, Islam still has a strong hold not only over the peasants but also over the intelligentsia. The constant purges of the leading Communists of the SSR's are evidence of persistent nationalism among the Soviet-created ruling class of the nationalities. The purges have continued even in the period of relative postwar stability. The Kazak SSR received a new Prime Minister at the end of 1951, the Uzbek Communist party a new First Secretary in 1950. Both the government and the party leadership of the Georgian SSR were drastically purged in 1952. Even more revealing is the purge of literature and history in all the Moslem SSR's in the last years. The official history of Kazakstan, published in 1943, was rejected by the authorities as suffering from bourgeois nationalist errors. The revised version appeared in two volumes in 1949 and 1950. Early in 1951 the Kazak party authorities decided that this, too, was unacceptable. The purge of history and literature has been extended during 1951 and 1952 to the North Caucasus and to the Azerbaijan, Turkomen, Uzbek, and Kirghiz SSR's. The past anti-Russian rebellions and wars of these nations, previously praised by Communist writers as anti-imperialist, are now interpreted as reactionary revolts, instigated by Turkish or British agents, against the progressive influence of Russian civilization. Moscow's determination to deprive the Moslem peoples even of their dead heroes shows its fear of the national consciousness of the new Moslem intelligentsia. Moscow, in fact, faces an unpleasant dilemma. In order to develop the economic resources of the Caucasus and Central Asia it needs educated people from these nations. But every Asian intellectual it produces is a potential leader of nationalist resistance to Moscow.

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THE peoples of Soviet Asia suffer from a threefold tyranny. Their workers are exploited in the same way as the European proletariat in the worst days of early capitalism; their peasants have exchanged serfdom to the nobility for serfdom to the state. All classes alike are subject to totalitarian terror. All nations alike are subject to an alien central government in Moscow. This combination of economic, political, and national oppression has no parallel in the history of European colonialism. Yet the spokesmen of this regime present themselves at meetings of the UN as champions of "national liberation" against "Western imperialism," and are accepted as such by large sections of Moslem, Far Eastern, and African opinion. It is time that the truth about Soviet colonialism were more widely known.

It is, however, important that Western opinion should not make the mistake of attributing these or other misdeeds of the Moscow rulers to "Russian imperialism." The Russian people never chose the Bolshevik regime. Russian workers and peasants are exploited by the same state capitalist bosses as Uzbek or Azerbaijani workers and peasants. Russian intellectuals are at the mercy of the same party inquisitors as Kazak or Georgian intellectuals. Even the Russian colonists living on the land seized from Kazak nomads who perished in the famine created from Moscow have no security. The non-Russian peoples may or may not one day have the chance to decide their own fate, and they then may or may not decide to separate from Russia and set up their own independent states. But it is not for the West to incite them against the Russians or to blame the wickedness of the Russian people for their fate. Mr. Kolarz, in his restrained and fair-minded conclusion, rightly stresses that only when Stalinist totalitarianism is a thing of the past, will the Russian people be able to enjoy the cultural intercourse and friendship both with their Asian neighbors and with the Western world, for which its genius, warped and frustrated by Bolshevik tyranny, truly fits it.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Professor MacIver Demurs

To the Editor of Commentary:

In the issue of Commentary for December 1952, Professor Handlin reflects on a subject of great significance, the place of authority in voluntary groups, and, as we would expect, his reflections on the general theme are well-considered and salutary. He properly points out the vital difference between the freedom of even the most democratic state, where the minority in all matters within the law-making powers must obey the will of the majority, and the freedom of voluntary organizations, where the minority is under no compulsive obligation to obey. The present writer is one of those who in the field of political theory have emphasized this distinction. Indeed he may fairly claim to have done at least as much to develop it and bring out its importance as any other author in that field. He is therefore the more surprised to find that he is, at least by implication, accused by Professor Handlin of making recommendations concerning the Jewish community relations agencies that flagrantly violate it.

Before we examine the alleged violation let us remark that even in voluntary organizations majority decisions are still a necessity—if they are going anywhere. A voluntary organization exists to advance certain particular purposes of the group. The group is agreed on the purposes or it would not exist. But purposes must be implemented by policies and there is never the same agreement on policies as on purposes. Therefore, if the group is to survive organizationally, the minority must most of the time be willing to go along with the decisions of the majority or at least not actively oppose them. A minority may refrain from working for some majority decisions it strongly objects to. There is no penalty for doing so, and in the last resort the minority can secede if it has fundamental differences on policy from the majority. But unless for the most part those who dissent on some policy or other are willing to go along with the majority the whole organization becomes futile and stultified. All this is extremely obvious and is illustrated every day in the working of thousands of organizations.

Take, for example, the organization called the National Community Relations Advisory Council. It is composed of a number of constituent bodies, national and local, all of them engaged in the battle against discrimination and ethnic and racial prejudice. It came into being because of insistent demands for some kind of teamwork between the major or national organizations active in the cause. To meet, to satisfy, or to stave off these demands this Council was accepted by these organizations, though it would be too much to say that it was enthusiastically welcomed by them. However, it was specifically assigned a coordinating function. It was essentially an *advisory* role that it possessed. But even an advisory role involves reaching conclusions and making decisions. And the trouble with this body was that, owing to its structure and to the delicate balance of opposing forces within it, it was in effect unable to decide anything by majority voice so far as positive resolutions on program-making were concerned. Committee after committee met and discussed and wrangled for months or even years and ended only in frustration.

Indeed the NCRAC was an excellent exhibit of the stultifying consequences of a system whose majority decisions can be negated by the opposition of any of the important elements within it. There is a great deal of historical evidence, from the time of the Roman Tribunate to that of the United Nations Security Council, to show the unhappy effects of this kind of majority frustration.

The outcome was that the complaints and demands coming from communities that supported and in large measure financed these national organizations again reached a point where a fresh review of the whole situation was called for. Under the auspices of a broad-based Special Committee on Evaluative Studies appointed by the NCRAC, the present writer undertook the troublesome task of directing in the first instance this review. It is the conclusions of his report, and the majority agreement at the Atlantic City Conference last year to proceed along lines congenial to that report, which Professor Handlin regards as "the first step in another of the successive attempts to impose the terms of unity on all Jews."

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"If it were so it were a grievous fault." But is it so? The same charge has been made in even stronger terms by representatives of the two seceding agencies. Indeed, they have not been nearly so modest as Mr. Handlin. It is not merely a "first step." It is the new tyranny in being. The official statement of one organization proclaims that our recommendations would "strip it of control of its own agency" and are designed "to mould the Jewish community into one single pattern."

Since the charge has been given ventilation in the pages of COMMENTARY, the writer is taking advantage of the fairness and catholicity of this organ, to which he has borne witness elsewhere, in order to present a very different viewpoint. I shall confine myself to the major recommendations in my report and ask the reader whether they are reasonably subject to the charge. What freedom is endangered? What authority is imposed on whom? What autonomy is destroyed?

THE first major recommendation is that a standing committee be set up for the exploration of the most effective strategy to combat intergroup prejudice. The suggestion was that a relatively small number of highly qualified Jewish leaders should be nominated for this committee and that they should associate with them three or four other persons, who should not be exclusively Jewish, chosen because of their distinctive contributions to this field of inquiry. *The committee would have no powers. It "should be entirely free, with no obligation except to its own sense of responsibility."* This proposal was made because prejudice is hard to dislodge, because untested methods may do more harm than good, and because here, if anywhere, inter-consultation is helpful. The two seceding agencies rejected this proposal. At a public meeting, in my own presence, the representative of one of them said it asked for a "dictatorial brain-trust" over the agencies!

The next major recommendation included a series of proposals for the avoidance of a constant source of needless competition and consequent embitterment between the national three specialized agencies and three general ones. The recommendation was to the effect that the three general agencies should not retain separate departments of their own in the respective fields of the specialized agencies. In other words, the labor group sufficed to deal with labor unions in the promotion of good community relations, and so did the rabbinate in approaching the official representatives of other religions and the veterans' group in similar dealings with veterans and their organizations. It was understood, of course, that each of the specialized groups would take advantage in so doing of any services the general agencies could give them. There were some technical qualifications attached to these broad proposals, but these do not concern us here. We raise only the question: was the recommendation a curtailment of the autonomy of the agencies? Was it not rather a means of assuring to each its own autonomy? What group freedom was jeopardized?

The next major recommendation again contained a series of proposals, this time designed specifically to avoid needless duplication and therefore waste of energy and funds. We saw no need, for example, for two separate departments within what was presumed to be a cooperative system, each separately collecting facts and clipping newspaper evidences concerning anti-Semitic activities. We saw no reason why two agencies or more should separately prepare briefs for the same court or provide the same legal service for a local community. And we suggested further that the two big agencies arrange between themselves for some apportionment of the work done in connection with particular groups of the outside community, educational groups, youth groups, farm groups, business groups, foreign language groups, and so forth—or, should they reject this suggestion, that they should at least have some process of inter-consultation in each area of group appeal.

Were these proposals a gross invasion of autonomy? Did they impose on any agency some overruling authority? Under the proposed plan no major field of action was to be taken away from any agency. It still left endless room for free effective work in the field of civil rights or of "mass appeal" or of community service. The limitations proposed were designed solely as a device for avoiding the competitive offer of the same services to the same outside groups, so that each agency could more effectively serve the *common* cause. Even in the specialized fields each of which had its particular agency, the others were still free to make their own contributions—what was proposed was simply that for the sake of harmony they do not conduct separate *departments* for these fields. There was no interference with the particular approach or particular method of any organization. No limitation whatever was suggested on the work of the agencies in other areas than that of community relations. And it should further be remembered that within this area many non-Jewish organizations are also engaged and therefore it was all the less desirable that separate Jewish agencies should tread on one

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another's toes in order that each might assert its boundless "autonomy." The energies and funds thus consumed could surely be put to better use.

Leaving aside some minor matters, we come next to the recommendation that perhaps aroused more antagonism than any of the others. There was so much testimony regarding the disruptive effects of the separate appeals made regularly to local communities by various agencies concerned alike with the promotion of intergroup relations but vying with one another in their claims of achievement that it seemed desirable to explore ways for improving the situation. Apart from anything else, the competitive scramble for funds diverted energies and was itself disturbing to good group relationships. Realizing the difficulty of the problem, I proposed merely an approach to it, holding that it would be preferable if each community would make its contribution not directly to this agency and to that but to the whole group of agencies concerned, earmarking it for community relations purposes and leaving the specific apportionment to a widely representative body. I offered accordingly three alternative suggestions for the achievement of this end, all intended to bring the process of financing into closer relation to actual programs. But I added that there were other possibilities to be explored, in the hope that the whole subject would be given the consideration it fully deserved.

Finally, I proposed that the NCRAC should have in its Executive Council the same basis of voting membership that it has in its Plenary Session. This would increase the voting power of the local communities, the number of which has considerably increased since the NCRAC was originally set up in 1944. But the NCRAC was given no power whatever to dominate any agency. It could make majority decisions still only in its capacity as an advisory body. No agency was bound to accept its views on how that agency should conduct any program.

Such is the substance of the major recommendations of this much-disputed report. And again I must ask where is the regimentation, where the tyranny, where the merger, where the authority that some unguarded tongues and pens have characterized as a dictatorship?

May I be permitted to make one further proposal, to wit, that this report be condemned, if it must be, in terms of what it says, not of what some zealous defenders of I-know-not-what faith declare it to say?

And now let us return to Professor Handlin. He scrupulously refrains from the misrepresentation of the actual context of my report in which so many others have indulged. But he conveys nevertheless a false impression alike of its substance and of its spirit. He associates it with a dire peril to "voluntary" Jewish organizations. He speaks as though it went hand in hand with some kind of conspiracy that is scheming to obtain control over the whole "Jewish community." He nowhere gives it credit for what it is, an honest attempt to achieve a modest degree of teamwork in the pursuit of a common Jewish interest. He does not actually refer to any of my specific proposals or to the long continued and vexatious problems to which they were addressed. He does not consider how these proposals might meet the need for better strategy and more effective operation in the crucially important struggle against group discrimination and prejudice.

These considerations are all essentially relevant to any proper assessment of the proposals and suggestions put forward in my report, and, alas, they have been ignored by many others of my critics. What Professor Handlin does say is that this report and the proceedings taken in furtherance of it constitute a "first step" on the road to regimentation and the downfall of "voluntary" organizations in this field.

The "first step" contention and its twin brother, the "thin end of the wedge," have no serious worth outside of the case against habit-forming drugs. They have been employed from time immemorial to block every kind of change, whether for the better or for the worse. They have been paraded, for lack of stronger arguments, against every social reform. If you walk on a path that leads toward a height it is the first step to going over the precipice. So Professor Handlin pictures a quite imaginary precipice over which the step taken toward the implementation of this report infallibly leads. In the same spirit the early foes of workmen's compensation pictured it as the first step toward the abyss of "statism." Many other safeguards of the worker did follow, but what is most likely is that in the end these measures saved the countries that adopted them from being swamped in a communistic revolution. Mr. Handlin himself in an article recently published elsewhere remarked that, contrary to what many professed to fear, the New Deal —which was a whole series of steps—did not lead to socialism and equally he does not expect the "new conservatism" to lead to fascism. In a word, he himself does not have much use for the "first step" bogey.

Why should he? It assumes that men have no discretion, no sense of limits, no balance, no judgment. Indeed, it is most of the time

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not an argument, but a substitute for an argument. Every wise policy, like every work of art, depends on the compounding of diverse elements, guided by a skilled sense of proportion. The "first step" objection ignores or denies the necessary condition of all achievement, of all advance.

That the relationship—or lack of relationship—between the various agencies with which we are here concerned is a problem requiring examination is attested to by the endless controversy that raged around them. Apart from other considerations that fact itself called for some readjustment, some wise policy-making. I had hoped my report would be a "first step" toward that goal. I did not expect all the agencies would agree to every proposal it contained. It was in the nature of the case that different agencies would object to different aspects of it. I had every respect for these genuine grounds of difference. There was room for compromise and for modification. But to reject all overtures, as the two big agencies have done, showed in my judgment a lack of the better statesmanship.

At the last Plenary Session they were offered, under the Barr resolution, various modifications of the proposals of the Executive Studies Committee, notably one to the effect that the division of labor should not be construed as giving exclusive operation to the specialized agencies but only "primary responsibility." This also they rejected, together with proposals for joint planning of programs. The resolution fully guaranteed the right of any agency to dissent from a majority decision and to act as it wished in the matter at issue, with the proviso that the constituent bodies within the NCRAC would be informed concerning the majority decision and the minority dissent. Could anything be less authoritarian?

The widespread demand of the communities they serve called for a different, a more conciliatory response. For the sake of the common cause for which they alike stand one must still hope that other counsels will prevail and that when the dust of a too stormy controversy subsides the seceding agencies will seek and find a basis for dwelling together in cooperative union with the rest.

ROBERT M. MACIVER
Columbia University
New York City

Rejoinder by Professor Handlin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I regret the necessity that has compelled Professor MacIver to write in response to my recent article. Yet he is, in part, responsible for events that have had the most disruptive consequences in Jewish communal life. And I can understand the obligation he now feels to understand the confused situation in which he finds himself. It would have been better had he sensed the weight of that obligation before he wrote his report.

I must make it clear to begin with, as I did in my answer to Harry Lurie's letter (February COMMENTARY), that my article was not a critique of the MacIver Report. It attempted rather to set forth the historic background of certain long-term tendencies in the life of American voluntary associations; and it saw at the root of the present difficulty the failure to recognize that voluntary bodies, as they had fruitfully developed on the American scene, differed from those under government in that whatever power and effectiveness such groups enjoy derives first and last from the voluntary consensus of opinion among their adherents; and that there is no way of exercising upon them, as in government, coercion based on a majority vote outside their ranks; against any such majority they will always have the right of withdrawal. Neither Mr. Lurie nor Professor MacIver disputes in their exposition any of the facts or interpretations about the essential spirit and mode of operation of voluntary agencies, and of various historical attempts to subject this traditional pattern to a coercion alien to it under the slogan of unity. Their objections lie rather to the judgment that such lack of respect for tendencies traditional to American voluntary agencies are at work in the Report and in the subsequent action of the NCRAC. I address the comments which follow to this question in the hope they may clear away some of the obscuring elements that engulf Professor MacIver's consideration of the matter.

THE case that Professor MacIver cites is illuminating. Should the Security Council be governed by the votes of a majority? There are ample theoretical grounds for urging that a council which represents groups (or states) rather than the members (or citizens) of those groups (or states), can only operate through accord and assent. But, in any case, we know that in the situation of the Security Council majority rule simply is not applicable. The alternative to decisions by consensus is no decision at all. For a council, by its nature, is a body that brings together organizations which do not wish to unite, but which retain freedom of action while they seek agreement in the areas in which agreement actually exists.

The failure of such a body to reach agreement does not, however, mean an inevitable

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obstacle to action, as Professor MacIver seems to think. The constituent organizations are still free to act, and there are numerous instances in which they have done so as groups of agencies, to the extent that several of them agree, or individually where no agreement exists.

It will be more profitable to turn away from these theoretical considerations to the particular elements of the case that concerns us. Professor MacIver opens his letter by pointing to the weaknesses of the NCRAC. It must be noted that his criticisms are almost entirely abstract and general; rarely are the particulars given to support the accusations of waste, duplication of effort, and frustration. I, for one, am inclined to give the NCRAC credit for greater achievements in the eight years of its existence than Professor MacIver.

His central criticism is that the body lacks the power to make decisions by majority rule, that it lacks coercive powers. Yet he proceeds to justify the Report and the subsequent actions based on it by the fact that the agencies in the NCRAC have not lost any part of their autonomy. "What group freedom was jeopardized?" he asks. If the latter part of his letter is correct, then the changes in organizations have not met the objections he raises in the early part of his letter.

Speaking of the NCRAC, Dr. MacIver states in his report repeatedly: "Its authority needs to be strengthened." What the Report states and what its sponsors hoped to achieve was the creation of an agency with authority to replace the earlier consultative advisory one. In the Report Professor MacIver spoke of majority decision as "a necessity." The deficiencies of the NCRAC in the past, he felt, were due to "its structure and to the delicate balance of opposing forces within it" that made it unable "to decide anything by majority vote." He emphasized the need for strengthening the body's "authority." The purpose was "that the NCRAC assume oversight of all agreements, assignments, and allocations established or to be established between the agencies and use its influence in all reasonable ways to assure the fulfillment of these arrangements." In view of these statements, the disclaimer of the present letter, that "the NCRAC was given no power whatever to dominate any agency" is hardly reassuring.

No doubt the NCRAC still lacks the obvious means of coercion; it was not indeed given an army, navy, or an air force. But that does not mean that it was left without such power. The NCRAC and the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds have other resources with which to bring pressure upon the constituent agencies, to say nothing of the influence they would obtain by virtue of their position as the official majority. Add to this the fact that Professor MacIver's proposal would have given *the NCRAC predominant control over budgetary matters,* and the extent of the coercive power available to it can be readily understood.

The test of the matter is quite simple. A majority decision is not necessary in order to give advice; there are many other ways in which advisory opinions can be rendered. A majority decision is necessary only to the degree that it serves to induce a minority to acquiesce in the views of the majority.

THESE misunderstandings are aspects of a larger problem, moreover. I suspect Professor MacIver's difficulties arise from a failure of comprehension as to the true nature of group life in America. In principle, Professor MacIver seems to recognize that "the Jews" are not a homogeneous group distinguished from other Americans only by the difference of the religion to which they adhere. But his practical recommendations recognize no bases of differentiation other than the simple denominational one. His blueprint for the future of community relations work takes no account of the fact that the Jewish group, like other comparable American groups, is also deeply divided within itself, ideologically and socially; and tolerance of those differences is as necessary to its members as tolerance of the whole group.

Within this letter, I find a number of striking illustrations of this failure to comprehend the diversities of Jewish life in America. Speaking of inter-religious affairs, Professor MacIver finds it logical to allocate to "the rabbinate" the task of dealing with the representatives of other religions. What is "the rabbinate"? The Report provisionally handed over this area to but one group of rabbis, those affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Even if some agency were devised to bring together the three largest groups, that would still not constitute them "the rabbinate." There are substantial numbers of Jews who regard no rabbi within any of these groups or no rabbi at all as their "representative."

Or again, the Report urges that all legal services be transferred to a single agency. Professor MacIver argues that there is "no reason why two agencies . . . should separately prepare briefs for the same court." This statement can only rest on the assumption that all Jews will have the same views on such questions as civil rights and religious education. After all, all are engaged in "the *common* cause."

The recent past has however abundantly

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shown us that differences as to the means of achieving that common cause are far more important than the abstract agreement as to common end. The consequence of putting all legal work into the hands of a single agency would be to label one viewpoint official, the others dissenting, to mobilize support for one, to suppress the others. And it has been the same in a variety of other fields—with the problem of collaborating with the veterans and the anti-Communists, and with the necessity of dealing with rabble rousers, for instance.

Nor is it enough to say that, under these conditions, the minority would still retain its freedom of dissent. Dissent is useless without the means of implementing it. With the departments devoted to this work disbanded, the "minority" agencies would be helpless. These circumstances show that the Report, and the implementing actions which followed upon it, did not recognize the legitimate differences among Jews, and did indeed take a first step toward imposing the kind of central authority that would minimize these differences.

I CANNOT close these comments without expressing my own regret that Professor MacIver has been less than fair, in this statement, to the dissenting agencies. They rejected his proposal for a "strategy committee" not because they objected to the scientific study of prejudice, but because his scheme involved acceptance of a single master strategy. The right to differ which is left them in this matter, and in questions of allocation of functions, is of but slight value without the means of making those differences effective. Professor MacIver's strictures on the competition for funds imply that this is peculiar to Jewish "defense" work rather than general to the fund-raising activities of all American voluntary agencies. And it is difficult to square the charge that organizations which ultimately withdrew from the NCRAC rejected "all overtures" with the fact that they did make counterproposals, did negotiate for two years, did accept some recommendations including the principle of joint planning, and did support Professor MacIver's proposal for a reassessment committee to study the whole field.

Respecting Professor MacIver's integrity as I do, I have no doubt these distortions are unintentional. But they strongly suggest the necessity of taking the long view, of seeing the immediate incident in which we are involved in the fuller perspective of its historic antecedents.

OSCAR HANDLIN

Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Errata

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to call attention to several instances of errata in Mr. Steven Marcus's article, "Terrors of Yoknapatawpha and Fairfield," in the December 1952 issue of COMMENTARY. He quotes from two of my stories, and in doing so, he allows these mistakes to pass:

(1) "That I am, say, myself, that this or this feel, you can't have, *or* [not *of*] from that man," etc., etc. (Page 576, 2nd column, first quotation.)

(2) Also, in that same sentence, he has dropped a comma, to wit: "from that man or this, me, you can't take it," etc., etc. (Comma after *me.*)

(3) In the next passage quoted, a word has been added, i.e., ". . . what was it you wanted to get out of something like that, that [no if here] you knew you couldn't," etc., etc.

Certainly none of these errors seems enough to bother with, so corrected; but Mr. Marcus is giving "samples of (my) writing. . . ," and these hardly help. In short, they make completely unclear, in context, what I would hope is not finally so difficult otherwise. Since Mr. Marcus has gone to that trouble of understanding what any of these things are about, he must feel as embarrassed as I do, seeing them turned into nonsense.

Otherwise I would only thank him for his comments—except to add that my name is Creeley, not Creely.

ROBERT CREELEY

Banalbufar
Mallorca, Spain

[Mr. Marcus was on a boat on his way to England when his article was set in type and he never saw proof. Undoubtedly the editors should share in the responsibility for these errors.—ED.]

Community

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

All I can say after reading your magazine for the first time is *splendid.* It is unique, refreshing, and above all, necessary.

If every succeeding issue is anything like your February 1953 number, you will never lose this reader. Even though I am isolated in the neighborhood where I live, it is comforting to discover a contemporary community with which I can associate myself.

ROBERT ROSEN

Brooklyn, N. Y.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Liberation—but How?

CONTAINMENT OR LIBERATION? By JAMES BURNHAM. John Day. 254 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by NORMAN THOMAS

THE sum total of James Burnham's philosophy puzzles me. I have never been able to see how his famous Managerial Revolution, predestined by history, fits into his later exposition of power politics with Communism as the sole menace. Nevertheless, in each of his books taken alone, Mr. Burnham is always readable, sometimes dogmatic, generally explicit, and usually plausible.

In his latest book he argues that foreign policy has no meaning for the United States except as "policy toward world Communism and the Soviet Union." There are only three possible choices: appeasement, which has by now been almost unanimously rejected by Americans; containment, as described by George Kennan; and liberation. Mr. Burnham is a slashing critic of containment and an ardent advocate of liberation—which great word means, to him, the breaking up of the Communist empire.

It is not hard for our author to make a strong case against the adequacy of containment as a long-range policy in terms not only of morals but of practical politics. In any case, Mr. Kennan has now been retired from the State Department—to our country's loss. In his behalf I could argue that Mr. Burnham at points comes close to caricaturing the policy of containment as described by Mr. Kennan and as interpreted by American action in Greece and Korea; and that his own actual policy of liberation differs mostly in words and emphasis, and in minor proposals of dubious value.

BUT my own case is somewhat different. I am willing to concede that the very nature of Communism as a secular religion, seeking universal power over the bodies and minds and souls of men, makes it impossible to believe that, over an indefinite period, it can be dealt with only in terms of containment. Coexistence for the Communist rulers may be a temporary necessity, but when Stalin and Malenkov accept it, they are indulging in verbal tactics rather than stating an honest conviction. The ultimate hope of the world requires profound modification of Communist imperialism by pressures from without or changes within.

However, one may effectively criticize containment without thereby automatically establishing a sound policy of liberation. It becomes of the utmost importance to inquire what specific program is offered as an alternative. In Secretary Dulles's case it looks as if responsibility has brought prudence, and his "liberation" policy is scarcely more than the Truman-Acheson one of recent years expressed in somewhat different phrases to appease Republicans and give the appearance of carrying out what were rather reckless campaign pledges.

As for Mr. Burnham, with all his brave talk one hardly discerns a really significant practical program. Piecing together his suggestions, one finds a program which runs about as follows:

First and most basic, an announcement of America's intention to liberate the nations which have fallen under Soviet power. (Mr. Burnham occasionally speaks of "peoples and nations now subject to Soviet imperial domination," but he isn't much concerned with possible differences between peoples and nations and his emphasis is on the latter.) Mr. Burnham is naturally concerned to say that this proclamation does not mean the immediate declaration of world war or an encouragement of premature risings. Positively, he says, liberation will mean the withdrawal of recognition "from the puppet Warsaw government in favor of the Free Polish (London) government." He acknowledges that in the captive states, "In the end, the political outcome depends on those who remained, not on the exiles. At the same time, the United States should keep searching for forms that express

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the ultimate conviction of freedom, should always act *as if* the present captivity were only an episode and liberation inevitable." An immediate project would be the formation of military units "under the flags of the now captive nations." This program of liberation "will at once transform the problem of escapees who have been sitting like undigestible dough on the stomach of the free world." There will be plenty for the escapees to do. Just what, and how, the author doesn't tell us in detail. At a public meeting following Stalin's death, Mr. Burnham added suggestions that we immediately release our anti-Communist prisoners in Korea, some of whom may find their way into Chiang's or the ROK's army, and that we "do something" to free Albania. Since Communist power operates outside as well as inside the Soviet sphere, "the liberation perspective suggests that the principal strategic aid in the non-Soviet nations should be the outlawing of the Communist enterprise. To that end all our political warfare should be directed."

Mr. Burnham's immediate objective in military terms is, like Mr. Kennan's, to stop further Communist progress in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In Asia, "along with strengthening Japan, the needed minimum is to prevent the consolidation of Soviet control in China, Southeast Asia, and India, so that those areas, even if under Communist governments, will be not assets but rather liabilities in the total Soviet power system." "The real development of Africa," Mr. Burnham almost casually remarks, must be envisioned by "the youth" of France, Italy, and other countries "as a European frontier."

In the course of his argument, Mr. Burnham is critical of all or almost all of our potential allies, and contemptuous of the American desire to be "loved." De Gaulle is our best hope in France, rather than any "wobbling third force." Marshall Plan aid was badly managed and didn't amount to much in political warfare.

I HAVE every reason to know by experience that even the most careful summary of a program which the author has already tried to state concisely is not quite fair. Nevertheless, it is my sober opinion that the careful reader of the book will find that my summary pretty accurately indicates Mr. Burnham's extraordinary and dangerous indifference to world opinion and our imperative need for allies, and his failure to give any content to the word *liberation* except the mere fact of anti-Communism.

His book will be read by most Asians and Europeans with a mixture of fear and anger. They will say his program points not toward liberation but straight to war. They will, for example, point to Mr. Burnham's rather extraordinary footnote in which he dismisses fear of preventive war by defining it as "the term used by the spokesmen of the Department of State to refer to proposals that the United States should attempt to recover the strategic initiative." He admits our need of allies for mass armies, but ignores our need of raw materials as well as the problem of ideological support.

His critics at home and abroad will not be at all impressed by Mr. Burnham's argument that "the Soviet Union is never in fact provoked. If Moscow wants general war, then general war will begin." For myself, I agree that Moscow at the moment does not want general war. It is, however, a gross misreading of history to say that the mightiest dictator is so completely the master of the forces he unleashes that he can decide absolutely when, if at all, a war shall begin. Nations which play at the edge of a precipice easily fall over.

Even if Mr. Burnham's concept of liberation were richer and fuller than it is, his scarcely concealed contempt for the leaders and the groups, whatever their weaknesses, who are most sincerely interested in democracy in Europe and Asia is a positive hurt to the United States in terms of successful political warfare. We Americans are powerful but not omnipotent. We should not expect to buy love—even children don't exactly love Santa Claus—but we need allies whom Burnham must estrange.

THE great weakness, however, of this book lies in the poverty of the author's very idea of liberation. Granting that the mere absence of Communist tyranny would be a blessing, that fact is anything but self-evident to most peoples of the world, and the ideological poverty of Mr. Burnham's concept of liberation against the seeming promise of Communism as it is presented outside the Iron Curtain condemns his type of political warfare to failure.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Burnham is right when he refutes the too easy notion of many good people that Communism is born solely of poverty and can be defeated by more Point Four

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Edited from the pages of *Commentary*
by ELLIOT E. COHEN

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aid to industrially backward areas. There remains, however, the problem of the strong appeal of Communism and the more pressing problem of making the democratic alternative more attractive. At this point, absolutely basic to "political warfare," Mr. Burnham gives us no help at all.

It is true enough that poverty does not automatically breed Communism, but Communism is much more than merely a dynamic "political apparatus" with able sales agents. And it is thus that Burnham describes it. Communism very successfully exploits poverty, and that not merely among the workers and the poor, but among intellectuals and even the rich.

The appeal of Communism is tremendous in regions once dominated by the older imperialism, British, French, and Dutch. Communist Russia, and now Communist China, say to India, Pakistan, Indonesia: "As you still are, so once were we, weak and fearful in the presence of the strong Western powers. We also were once peasant nations. Look at our growth in power, in standing in world politics, and in industrialization. We owe it all to Communism."

More than once I was told in India by people still non-Communist: "We do not like Communism but India must go Communist because only so can she be disciplined for industrialization and accumulate capital even at the expense of our hungry stomachs." The testimony I heard in Southeast Asia was universal to the effect that the important Chinese colonies in Malaya, Thailand, and Indonesia were at first to a man pro-Communist because of their pride in the new unity, dignity, and power that Mao supposedly was bringing to China. Today if many of the "overseas" Chinese have fallen away, it is because they have learned how illusory are the benefits of Communist rule in their homeland, and how grimly real are Communist tyranny and oppression.

There is no conceivable political warfare which can win against Communism in Asia today, and Africa tomorrow, unless the democracy of the West can present an economic program, a political ideal, and a concept of world fraternity better than that which Communism offers, and infinitely better than Communism delivers once it has power. It is as part of such a program that Point Four, revised and improved, has value beyond Mr. Burnham's apparent contempt.

WHAT alternatives do we have to "containment" and "liberation"?

There is no conceivable program which could wholly atone for past mistakes (and I agree with Mr. Burnham there have been serious mistakes) while guaranteeing to us Americans and to mankind the inestimable boon of abiding peace and perfect freedom. Nevertheless, there are certain definite things that we can and should do better than we have done. The overwhelming mass of mankind recoils from atomic war and has no hope of liberation through war. This is the moment in history when President Eisenhower should speak out and directly challenge Soviet talk of coexistence and love of peace. He should say to the world with a power, persistence, and ingenuity which may ultimately penetrate even the Iron Curtain:

"We Americans believe that freedom and peace will only be secured when they bless all the sons and daughters of earth. We believe that the free world can coexist with the Soviet empire without general war but only if there is a transfer of conflict out of the realm of global warfare by acceptance of universal, fool-proof disarmament down to a police level, supervised and enforced under a strengthened United Nations. The mere acceptance of disarmament would of itself end many of our conflicts. The basic struggle of freedom and democracy against totalitarianism must still go on, and we challenge the advocates of totalitarianism to wage it without resort to oppressive preparations for war, fought with instruments so horrible that the survivors of the conflict may envy the dead. We intend to maintain our military strength so long as a military threat continues. But we stand ready to sit down and consider working agreements for bringing about disarmament and for maintaining it. We stand ready to divert the billions saved from armaments to constructive and cooperative war against our own poverty and the world's misery."

I doubt that the Soviet government would easily accept the controls necessary for effective disarmament. Yet we could find ways to remind them, and even, to some extent, the Soviet people, that the one interest we all have in common is to banish the threat of war's unimaginable destruction and to lift the terrible weight of the arms race off all our backs. The kind of statement I urge could almost at once recover for us an initiative for peace and the

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respect of the peoples who passionately desire it.

Doubtless there are some among the refugees from the Kremlin satellite states and from Mao's China who in their bitterness see no hope for their freedom save in another war. I do not think they speak for the masses of the people in the countries which they have left. I do not believe that America's dedication to "liberation" will strengthen us among the captive peoples if they can be persuaded that "liberation" means atomic war.

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Jewish Bible and Civilization

THE OLD TESTAMENT: KEYSTONE OF HUMAN CULTURE. By WILLIAM A. IRWIN. Schuman. 293 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by THEODOR H. GASTER

MOST people take it for granted that the teachings of the Old Testament are one of the prime foundations of Western religion and ethics; yet there are few who would be able to set down on paper just what the Old Testament teaches about God, man, and the world, or in what way its teachings are distinctive and unique. It is this that Professor Irwin has attempted to do in the present luminous, sensitive, and beautifully written book, an expansion of the essay which he contributed, seven years ago, to the University of Chicago volume, *The Intellectual Advancement of Ancient Man*. He has tried to give us a rounded picture of Old Testament thought about the

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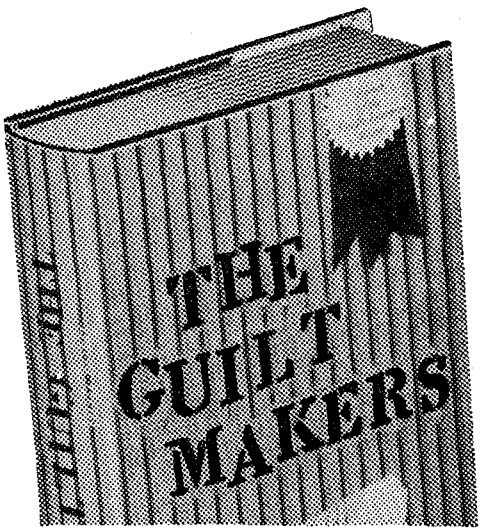

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perennial problems of the universe and man's place within it.

The task is not easy. In the first place, the Old Testament is the product of many minds, many centuries, and many environments, so that its thought is not always consistent or monolithic and does not represent any single ordered "system." Second, the views of the ancient Hebrews about God, man, and the world were more in the nature of insights born of experience than of philosophies born of methodical speculation. Consequently, they leave unsolved or unapprehended many problems which a purely rational approach would raise, and there are many gaps in logic. Third, it is extremely difficult for modern man to strip away from the Hebrew concepts the mass of later ideas which now encrust them—that is, to get back to the ancient categories of thought and to avoid pressing them into alien molds.

Professor Irwin is conscious, however, of these and other limitations, and one of the things which makes his treatment so valuable is the very fact that he does not represent Hebrew thought as all-inclusive and all-comprehending, but faces up honestly to its logical deficiencies and ambiguities, preferring to regard it as a tentative and dynamic quest rather than as a positive and static "solution."

IRWIN finds that the Hebrews made three principal contributions to man's conception of the universe.

The first was that the world was governed by a God who was essentially good, who was prepared, for example, to wreak punishment on the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites, not simply because they had assailed his own particular people, but because they had outraged a universal standard of ethics.

The second contribution was that history was a revelation of this essentially ethical God in the world of men. For the Israelites, says Irwin, "history was a great process; it was going somewhere, but that progress was under the will and direction of the God of goodness whom Israel's faith envisaged."

The third was that man, too, was essentially good—a limited replica of God. "He was made in the image of God, but a little lower than He, worthy to companion with Him, but yet so far removed that the highest human attainments, even the best aspirations, are acceptable only by divine grace. . . . God is far other than man. But it is entirely false to Old Testament thought to claim that He was 'wholly' other. Israel's thinkers would have repudiated such an idea with indignation." Consequently, the "sins" of man were not to be regarded as evidence of any innate turpitude but were to be attributed solely to the fact that, through the imperfection of his nature, he necessarily missed the mark and deviated at times from the divine guidance.

All of these points are supported by abundant quotation and analysis. Yet on some of them it seems possible to demur.

Irwin concedes, for example, that monotheism was not formally articulated in Israel until the time of Hosea, and he points out that Israel's contribution to religion was, in any case, not the creation of monotheism *per se* but of *ethical* monotheism. One wonders, however, whether the common and time-worn antithesis between monotheism and polytheism is not really a distinction created only by our own inadequate categories. For the truth seems to be that all primitive religions really recognize *two* distinct types of suprahuman beings: on the one hand there are *numina* who lie behind the individual phenomena of nature, who are responsible for particular moments of awe or trauma, and who may also be regarded, in more social terms, as the "spirits" or personified quintessences of peoples or localities; and on the other, there is usually some transcendent being who informs or exemplifies the cosmic "all-together." The former are the practical "low gods" of cult and worship—the gods

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who are *used;* while the latter are the rarefied "high gods" of abstract speculation, the gods of philosophy and myth. The two types exist side by side, issuing from different but parallel sources, and it is only because we have given to both of them the name "gods" that we have been led into the error of assuming that they stand in genealogical succession and that monotheism was a development of polytheism. Accordingly, the vexed question of whether the more ancient Hebrews were monotheists or polytheists has, in fact, no substantive reality; it is simply the product of terminological confusion, and reflects only our own inadequate approach.

The same may be said of the common assertion that God is good. Baldly stated in this form, the assertion suggests a host of ideas which were in fact foreign to the Hebrew outlook and which logically involve a vicious circle. It suggests that there is some absolute standard of goodness (usually identified with maximum benefit) to which God absolutely and entirely conforms. The Hebrew conception would seem, however, to rest rather on the concept of the normal than of the ethical. God is the source of *tzedek*, not in the sense of righteousness, but in that of the norm, the regular, the standard—the inherent pattern of cosmos. His law—more properly, his guidance (*torah*)—is the revelation of that norm in nature and event, and man is required to conform to it not for the mere sake of obedience, but in order to live in harmony with the universe and thus advance its progress by realizing within it his own maximum potentialities. Such conformity is "goodness," while non-conformity or deviation (Hebrew: *avon*) is "badness," because thereby men lose their bearings in the world and at the same time frustrate the plan of God. In a word, good and evil are pragmatic standards applicable to man, not to God. Man is good when he is "normal," not normal when he is good. Conversely, he is evil when he is abnormal, not abnormal when he is evil.

Other problems, too, arise immediately out of the Old Testament view of God. If God is the pervading spirit of the universe, how can he be localized at any one spot—say, Bethel or Jerusalem? And if God determines the regimen of the universe, does man possess free will?

It is not the least of Irwin's merits that he does not attempt to foist upon the Hebrews

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any definitive answers to these questions. Instead, he carefully presents just what the various Old Testament writers have to say about them, and then points out candidly that no final synthesis was ever achieved. Nevertheless, one may be permitted to wonder whether the truth does not really lie deeper than this, and whether some of the tentative explanations of Hebrew concepts which Irwin does venture to offer are not in fact influenced, albeit unconsciously, by modern categories of thought. The real point may be that it is not here a question of the Hebrews' having floundered around in their efforts to resolve logical inconsistencies, but rather of their not having recognized them as such, owing to the fact that their outlook was neither determined nor controlled by rational dialectic.

Take, for example, the seeming contradiction between the omnipresence of God and his localization. Irwin suggests that the Hebrews may have conceived of God as a kind of fluid essence which manifested itself at particular places in the form of flame or exhalation. But is this explanation necessary? May not the truth really be that on an a-logical plane of feeling, a distinction is drawn between localization and concentration, between omnipresence and ubiquity, so that when the cosmic and universal God is said to be on hand at a particular place, this by no means implies that he is confined or restricted to that place, but only that it serves as a spot where mortals can make contact with him (compare Exodus 29:42; Numbers 17:19)?

Similarly, the logical contrast between predetermination and free will may not have presented itself so rigidly to the Hebrew mind, to which the direction of human affairs may have appeared rather as an act of partnership between God and man, God thinking out and revealing the plan (*torah*), and man being left, of his own choice and volition, to realize and exemplify it. To be sure, this comes very close to Irwin's own very fine formulation: "Israel could be the medium of divine revelation, and yet could in the same act preserve her intellectual independence; indeed, only because of this independence could she be such a medium." The point is, however, that in speaking here of "independence," Irwin may well be introducing a dichotomy which springs only from *logical* thought and of which the Hebrews may have been totally unaware.

The same unwitting concession to modern logical categories may be seen also in the assertion that "God, for Israel, was supreme above nature, and employed it for his purposes." Here, again, it may be asked whether the Hebrew concept of a transcendental, universal God was not in fact what *we* mean when we speak of a transcendental, universal Nature. In that case, God did not transcend nature because he *was* nature; all that he transcended were individual natural phenomena.

THE general point that I am here trying to make is that our understanding of Hebrew and, indeed, of all early and primitive types of religion, is today beclouded by the fact that we tend to approach them through alien categories. The moment we use such terms as "god," "religion," "worship," and the like, we

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unload upon them a mass of foreign concepts or of concepts so charged with later meanings and nuances that they obscure rather than clarify. Nor is this a purely academic point. Through the reduction of Hebraism and Judaism to our own modes of thought, much of their distinctiveness and validity evaporates. When *torah* becomes Law, and *elohim* becomes God, and *tzedek* becomes ethical conduct, and *nebuah* becomes prediction, what made each of them distinctive is at once swallowed up, and we trade our birthright for an ideological mess of pottage.

It is the great value of Professor Irwin's work that, though at times he seems unconsciously to succumb to this pitfall, in the broad lines of his interpretation he gives us a splendid and radiant restatement of Hebrew thought as it really was. And he does so in terms readily intelligible to the "common reader." Indeed, the reviewer believes that this is the best presentation of the subject in English, and that it is a book which every thinking Jew should read.

Hot Head, Cold Heart

ARROW IN THE BLUE. By ARTHUR KOESTLER. Macmillan. 353 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by MARTIN GREENBERG

IN SETTING out to write his autobiography, of which this is the first volume, Arthur Koestler first retrospectively cast his "secular horoscope" —i.e., he looked up the issue of the London *Times* of the morning following his birth, which took place in Budapest on September 5, 1905, to see what constellation of events was then in the ascendant. He began with the advertisements; these yielded only a period flavor. Next came reports of such innocent events as a dinner party given by King Edward at the Kursaal in Marienbad and the capture of an Englishman by brigands in Macedonia. A quotation from a bellicose comment by the Paris *Temps* on the Moroccan crisis made him perk up ("This is becoming significant. Mars enters the Second House"). Significances followed thick and fast with a dispatch from Tiflis about disorders in Baku (the Russian revolution of 1905) and a report of "Disturbances at Kishineff" (a pogrom). Koestler felt his horoscope was complete when he read the day's editorial: a comment on the Russo-Japanese treaty of peace, signed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire,

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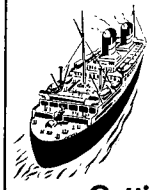

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at the very hour of his coming into the world, and containing an enthusiastic eulogy of victorious Japan's totalitarian system of bringing up the individual in perfect subordination to "the tribe and the State."

"The clock that struck the hour of my birth," he writes, "also announced the end of the era of liberalism and individualism, of that harshly competitive and yet easy-going civilization. . . . I was born at the moment when the sun was setting on the Age of Reason."

This is a good illustration of the Koestlerian method of autobiography, which consists in seeing the subject, himself, against the backdrop of an important abstraction, historical or psychological.

My first thought was, "This is to treat oneself with a certain air. What vanity, to make History dance attendance on his birth." But reading on in the autobiography showed the thought to be unkind, and the opposite of the truth: it is the impressive abstraction that occupies the center of the stage; the "I" is a modest figure in the foreground serving only to illustrate it. Part One of the book has for epigraph a quotation from Tolstoy: "And he went on talking about himself, not realizing that this was not as interesting to the others as it was to him." *Arrow in the Blue,* for all its surface assurance, is that somewhat contradictory thing, the autobiography of a truly diffident man; one who, convinced at bottom that he is personally of little account, finds significance in his life only as it annotates some general notion.

The thirst for the absolute is a stigma which marks those unable to find satisfaction in the relative world of the now and here. My obsession with the arrow [at the age of 16, lying on a hill slope in Buda, he had seen in a vision a super-arrow winging its way into the blue of space, on and on—and so grasped for the first time the notion of infinity] was merely the first phase of the quest. When it proved sterile, the Infinite as a target was replaced by Utopias of one kind or another. It was the same quest and the same all-or-nothing mentality which drove me to the Promised Land and into the Communist Party. In other ages aspirations of this kind found their natural fulfilment in God. . . . Now, however, after the shattering catastrophes which have brought the Age of Reason and Progress to a close, the void has made itself felt. I grew up . . . [in] an age of disillusions and an age of longing.

But an autobiography is about oneself; surely Koestler doesn't go on forever about the sunset of the Age of Reason and the sunrise of the Age of Longing? As his personal history is a footnote to Universal History, so his individual psyche serves him as a case study in general psychology. Koestler sets up ingenious psychological categories to describe himself; but these eclipse the very personality they are supposed to convey, self-analysis turning into a kind of self-effacement. His childhood, we learn, was a constant struggle between "Ahor" (the Archaic Horror) and "Babo" (the Baron in the Bog), a clever-sounding antithesis he invents to express the irrational fears that beset him, and the resolution he summoned up out of his very weakness (like Baron Munchausen pulling himself out of the bog by his own hair) to overcome them. But between the millstones of Ahor and Babo, very little of the child survives. His mature personality, he tells us, is split into an active half and a contemplative half, a Commissar and a Yogi. The first suffers from Chronic Indignation, which sets the adrenalin to flowing and sends him out into the world to right its wrongs. But then indignation gives way to the "self-dissolving stillness of the 'oceanic feeling,'" and the Yogi takes over. The struggle is never resolved. But in this seesaw of the Yogi and the Commissar, we lose the man.

Even where Koestler appears to be most candid, the candor is mostly sophistication. He doesn't so much tell the plain truth about himself as cleverly forestall a psychoanalytic "aha!" on the reader's part by getting in there first with the analysis. In all the neat and sardonic oppositions that he sets up, there is little room for those slack and irregular but living things that make up the truly personal. "Shyness and

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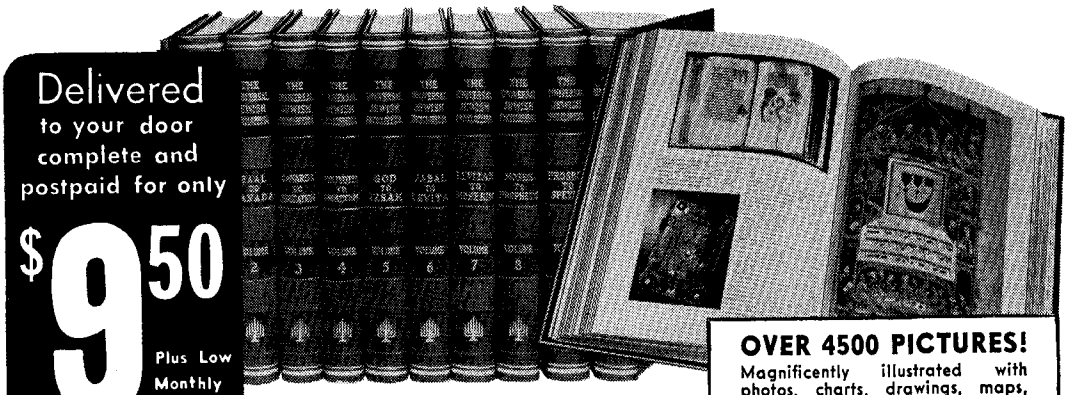

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insecurity have remained my silent companions to this day." He is an autobiographer with no confidence at all in his autobiography except as it serves an idea larger than self.

I find this self-depreciation very Jewish. Pushed to an extreme, it becomes self-hatred; and indeed we find this feeling more or less coloring everything that Koestler has to say about the Jews. It is true that he blames the faults of the Jews on external circumstances, especially their homelessness; but this doesn't mitigate the stridency or correct the imbalance of his criticisms. His remarks on the Jews have a special nastiness about them that comes from their being aimed at himself. The homelessness of the Jews, he writes (himself a man who has drifted about from place to place),

> . . . increased the protective adaptability of their surface, and petrified their inner core. Constant friction polished their many facets: reduced to drift-sand, they had to glitter if they wanted to avoid being trodden on. . . . Their natural selector was the whip: it whipped the life out of the feeble and whipped the spasm of ambition into the fit.

Reading this (which he quotes from *Thieves in the Night*), you immediately think: Glitter and ambitiousness are two qualities very much in evidence in Koestler's own work. He tries to lose himself in generalizations, so it is in generalizations that we must look for his really personal statements; the ostensibly autobiographical portions are thin and unrevealing.

Arrow in the Blue, though unsuccessful as an autobiography, is not a boring book. Nothing Koestler writes is ever boring. (This is as much a fault, in his case, as it is a virtue; to be so unfailingly entertaining argues shallowness and even vulgarity.) His autobiography, however, is not entertaining because it tells the story of an exciting life, just as it is not their plots that make his novels crackle with tension. Koestler's life seems to have been varied and exciting enough, but it is never the excitement of *life* that you find in a Koestler book. Nor are the people (or places) we meet painted with any particular depth or vividness. Like the characters of his novels, they are hit off with a certain facility, but remain bare and minimal and, really, unregarded. People leave him cold, it is for ideas that he burns. As the Yiddish saying has it, his is a cold heart and a hot head.

The excitement of Koestler's books is an ideological excitement. They are not about men and women, but about Communists and ex-Communists, Zionists and ex-Zionists, Freudians and ex-Freudians. In his world everybody is either joining or quitting a party; it is a world of movements and members, and the loud crash you hear is of the idea running head on into reality. Koestler remarks that the irrepressible propagandizing Commissar in him has spoiled all his novels. This lack of pride of authorship is nice, but he couldn't be more wrong; it is their "propaganda," or ideological excitement, that gives his novels their distinctive quality. Koestler's books are so very up to date because modern history is mostly the history of movements. They will lose their interest as these movements recede into the past. But meanwhile they continue to fascinate, by their extreme relevance, the educated, movement-joining middle class.

The impression Koestler makes on one through his autobiography is not a particularly sympathetic one. You are put off by his glibness, smart-aleckiness, and eternal ding-dong superficial antithesizing. It comes as no great surprise to learn that he was once science editor for a big Berlin newspaper and turned out popular science articles full of synthetic intellectual drama; in his literary work he is a popular scientist of ideologies. He is good on Communism, though he oversimplifies; his best title to fame is as a teacher, along with George Orwell (whom he does not otherwise resemble), about the true nature of Communism.

He is too uneasy about himself to be really candid, and yet he has the candor to tell you about his uneasiness.

> There are various types of false personalities; the one to which I belong is recognizable, among other things, by the fact that he feels sure of himself when addressing a meeting or holding forth at a crowded party, but becomes the more insecure the smaller the audience, and reveals his basic timidity when alone with one other person. Genuine people are mostly the other way around.

The word you think of for Koestler is "clever," a word that both concedes him his talents and scores him off. But then you discover in his autobiography that he has beaten you to it and already scored himself off with that same word. He is pretty much of a cold fish, but he is also honest. That is something.

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The Making of Prodigies

EX-PRODIGY: MY CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH. By NORBERT WIENER. Simon and Schuster. 309 pp. $3.95.

Reviewed by GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

ONE of the famous exhibits in the 19th century's showcase of infant prodigies is the four-year-old Macaulay who, when asked how he was feeling after having been scalded, replied: "Thank you, madam, the agony is abated." The average modern reader is probably more appalled than amused by this remark, torn between sentiments of incredulity and pity: incredulity that the boy did in fact speak in the well-rounded sentences of the cultivated gentleman, and pity for any child unhappy enough to speak in such sentences. For it is the modern conviction that refinement of mind is as unnatural as refinement of manners, and that both are symptomatic of a profound spiritual malaise (or psychic disturbance, as the argot has it). And when the rest of the evidence is introduced—a childhood voluntarily spent, from the age of three, in reading rather than playing; a tendency to talk, as the maid complained, "quite printed words"; an intellectual turn so pronounced that at the age of seven he could think of no more delightful occupation than writing a "compendium of universal history" or composing poetry in the epic manner at the rate of one hundred lines a day—it takes a person of strong and independent convictions not to have a sneaking suspicion that such a child is either something of a monster, as if mental excellence could only be acquired at the expense of moral soundness, or at least something of a neurotic, as if health is better served by mediocrity than by brilliance.

This distrust of the prodigy is so prevalent today that it is hard to realize how recent a prejudice it is. Nor is it only a consequence of our current preoccupation with psychology, with "mental health." More important is the fact that the prodigy no longer appears to be simply an adult in child's clothing, which would merely be a violation of convention, but a freak in child's clothing, which is an outrage against nature. An adult gravely pronouncing the words, "The agony is abated," would be almost as much of an anomaly today as a child voicing the same words. The child Macaulay was regarded by his seniors as an instance of extraordinary precocity—as the premature development of a manner of thought and mode of life that was, while by no means commonplace, at least not entirely uncommon. Today's prodigy is looked upon less as precocious than as queer.

It is this suspicion of queerness and unnaturalness that plagued the youth of one of our contemporary prodigies, Norbert Wiener. Wiener is today best known as the creator of Cybernetics, a theory of communication that embraces both man and machine and that has had its most spectacular application in the development of the "thinking machine." In his youth, however, he was known to the public as a curiosity who found his place in the Sunday supplement, as he himself remembers it, somewhere between the report of a two-headed calf and the account of a disreputable liaison. About his actual juvenile accomplishments, people cared little; it was enough for them that he had entered college before the age of twelve and was a graduate student at Harvard at fifteen. But while millions of newspaper readers gaped at yet another ten-day wonder, his intimates watched him suspiciously for the signs of inferiority and failure that must, they reasoned, be the fate of anyone who so boldly defied the laws

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of nature. Although he was graduated from college *cum laude,* for example, he was not elected to Phi Beta Kappa, because, he was given to understand, it was doubted that an infant prodigy could have a respectable future. "There is a tradition," Wiener concludes in his autobiography, "that the child who makes an early start is intellectually drawing on his life capital of energy and is doomed to an early collapse and a permanent second-rateness, if not to the breadline and the madhouse."

So pervasive was this conviction of doom that Wiener himself, once he realized that he was a prodigy—that not all children of the age of nine could produce commendable sight translations from the Latin, were widely read in biology and chemistry, or well advanced in algebra and geometry—came to share it. He shifted from field to field, from college to college and job to job, uncertain of his own talents, unappreciated by his teachers and employers, and isolated among his classmates and colleagues. Ultimately, however, each departure and arrival, each new exploration and apprenticeship, added to his fund of information, until the prodigy could rest confident in the knowledge that he was one of America's leading scientists.

Wiener's father, a product of the Jewish Enlightenment and an autodidact philologist of extraordinary accomplishments, was among those who contributed to his son's self-depreciation. While he sincerely tried to protect the boy from the knowledge of his precocity, he was himself not averse to giving interviews to the press—interviews the point of which was that his son was no more than an average boy who simply profited by superlative parental training. At the time the boy was completely convinced of the truth of this theory: he felt his virtues to be to his father's credit, his vices to his own discredit. It took him many years to arrive at a sense of its injustice, and his autobiography is at least partly an effort to right the balance, as he now sees it, between his own superior faculties and his father's earnest endeavors. He does not entirely hide his satisfaction when he reports the failure of his father's second experiment—that crucial control—in the creation of genius, an experiment conducted upon the recalcitrant younger son of the family.

In a book that provides so many instructive parallels and conformities to the autobiography of another great prodigy, John Stuart Mill, this one divergence, in the estimate of the relative importance of education and genius, of father and son, stands out as its most interesting feature. In Mill's description of the educational regimen laid down by his father are to be found many of the devices which the Wiener father, probably unknowingly, was to duplicate a century later: an early and intensive acquaintance with languages and the classics, the daily recitation of lessons to a father who managed at the same time to attend to his own writing and to his son's errors, the extension of the educational process to include the teaching of younger brothers and sisters, an emphasis upon solitary physical activities such as walking and climbing to the exclusion of those requiring manual dexterity, and, most important, the deliberate cultivation of a sense of humility in the pupil. In passages that anticipate almost the words of Wiener, Mill describes the vigilance with which his father kept him from praise and even from awareness that his attainments were at all unusual. "[He told me that] whatever I knew more than others, could not be ascribed to any merit in me, but to the very unusual advantage which had fallen to my lot, of having a father who was able to teach me, and willing to give the necessary trouble and time; that it was no matter of praise to me, if I knew more than those who had not a similar advantage, but the deepest disgrace to me if I did not." Of the propriety of this course in humility, Mill, unlike Wiener, professed himself to be entirely satisfied, and although a skeptical reader might find suggestions of ambivalence and hostility, Mill's expressed conclusions, that whatever he could do "could assuredly be done by any boy or girl of average capacity and healthy physical constitution," must surely count for a good deal.

The disagreement between Mill and Wiener may be ascribed to the fact that one had in mind the social philosopher, the other the mathematician, and that while philosophers may be created by parental fiat, mathematicians are born. Wiener's own account of the mental process by which he arrives at mathematical ideas makes of mathematics a creative art no less dependent upon the demiurge of genius than any other art. Yet even he would insist upon the vast stock of knowledge—knowledge hardly won, the product of discipline and labor—that goes into the making of the good mathematician or scientist. Moreover it is his experience

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This *I Believe*

By Albert Schweitzer*

"IN MY JUDGMENT . . . of the situation in which mankind finds itself at the present time, I am pessimistic. I cannot make myself believe that that situation is not so bad as it seems to be, but I am inwardly conscious that we are on a road which, if we continue to tread it, will bring us into 'Middle Ages' of a new character.

"The spiritual and material misery to which mankind of today is delivering itself through its renunciation of thinking and of the ideals which spring therefrom, I picture to myself in its utmost compass. And yet I remain optimistic. One belief of my childhood I have preserved with the certainty that I can never lose it; belief in truth. I am confident that the spirit generated by truth is stronger than the force of circumstances. In my view no other destiny awaits mankind than that which, through its mental and spiritual disposition, it prepares for itself. Therefore I do not believe that it will have to tread the road to ruin to the end.

"If men can be found who revolt against the spirit of thoughtlessness, and who are personalities sound enough and profound enough to let the ideals of ethical progress radiate from them as a force, there will start an activity of the spirit which will be strong enough to evoke a new mental and spiritual disposition in mankind.

"Because I have confidence in the power of truth and of the spirit, I believe in the future of mankind."

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that no natural facility of learning can substitute for discipline, that facility, in fact, because it encourages a laxness of mind, is often the fatal flaw in an otherwise promising student. And it is for this discipline that he has, after all, to thank his father.

In Wiener's class at the Harvard graduate school in 1909-10, there were no fewer than five properly accredited prodigies, ranging from the age of eleven to Wiener's mature fifteen. Of these five, at least three were the sons of aggressively ambitious fathers; the other two Wiener knew nothing about. Whether it is good or bad to be a prodigy remains a moot point. What seems to be undeniable is that it helps to have a parent intent upon making you one, and an early education as arduous as the juvenile nervous system can sustain.

Intellectuals' Homecoming

AMERICA AND THE INTELLECTUALS. A SYMPOSIUM. Partisan Review Series, Number Four. 118 pp. $1.00.

Reviewed by OSCAR HANDLIN

THIS collection of essays evokes immediate surprise. After all, moderation and good sense are not what we have come to expect of intellectuals writing about America. The last few decades of alternate embrace and repulsion leave us ill prepared for the seriousness of the treatment here.

The papers here assembled, originally written for *Partisan Review*, deal with the timely theme of the relation of the intellectual to his country's culture. Certainly, at a moment when the struggle for world dominance is fought as bitterly in the minds of men as on the battlefields, it is well to reconsider the nature of the civilization we have upheld against the threat of successive totalitarianisms.

On the whole these contributions are thoughtful and thought-provoking. They recognize the value of the democratic context of life in the United States, yet they show no disposition to affirm that it is illicit to prefer American political institutions to those of the Sovet Union without being ready to laugh with Milton Berle, honor Thomas Wolfe, and drink cokes. There is furthermore no inclination to minimize the gravity of the problems our society poses for the creative personality. Indeed the treatment is so common-sensical, it verges on the matter-of-fact, and often the dull.

On second thought it may be our surprise at the obvious that is really surprising. I suspect, in our own thinking, we have given too much weight to the ideas of the generation of intellectuals that flourished in the first three decades of this country. These were the self-proclaimed "disinherited of art" who felt "the soil of American perception is a poor, little, barren artificial deposit." With Henry James, these writers proclaimed that in the United States "unlovely circumstances are . . . void of all that . . . prompts . . . the artist." Our heritage from that generation is the suspicion that the intellectual has always been at odds with our culture, in fact, that American society is inherently antagonistic to art.

YET in the long retrospect of history, this suspicion is altogether unfounded. The American intellectuals always occupied a defined, and a creative, place in their society. The Puritan divines of the 17th century, the political thinkers of the 18th, and transcendentalists of the 19th had this in common, that they stood in a vital and rewarding relationship to the dominant trends of their times. None of them labored under the necessity of escaping their milieu; none of them was aware of an impassable gulf that cut them off from the masses among whom they lived. On the contrary, they accepted the obligation of communicating with those masses, and thought their work deeply involved in, rather than detached from, their society. This was as true of Jonathan Edwards and Herman Melville who did not succeed in establishing a continuing rapport, as it was of Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Jefferson who did.

The notion of a deep division between American intellectuals and their society is recent and has been short-lived. It is a product of an interval in our history in which some sensitive men preferred to evade the necessity of dealing with the rapid changes about them. Their failure will discourage only those tempted by similar evasions.

That most of the authors represented in this volume are not so tempted is heartening. The intellectual in America occupies a situation unlike that of his counterparts elsewhere. But the very newness of his position is his opportunity; for it holds forth fresh possibilities for the creative exercise of his intelligence.

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Germany: A New Myth?

IN THE NAZI ERA. By SIR LEWIS NAMIER. New York, St. Martin's Press. 204 pp. $2.50.

DRAMATISCHE TAGE IN HITLERS REICH. By ERWIN WICKERT. Stuttgart, Steingrüben Verlag. 400 pp.

Reviewed by H. L. TREFOUSSE

IN HIS latest book, Sir Lewis Namier continues the critical examination of the memoirs of German statesmen and generals that he began in his *Europe in Decay* two years ago. He contends that we are faced with the very real danger of the creation of new historical myths concerning Germany's second defeat in a world war. Survivors of Hitler's regime, he writes, have been attempting to convince the world of the uprightness of the German army and its generals, the fundamental decency of most of the old officials of the Foreign Office, and of Chamberlain's folly in rejecting the offers of the German "underground" to stop Hitler in 1938. If everything went wrong it was all Hitler's—and Russia's and Britain's and America's and Poland's and Czechoslovakia's—fault, hardly at all theirs. They had always hated, and worked against, Hitler and Co.

The British historian seeks to demolish these and similar arguments in a series of essays dealing with the writings of General Franz von Halder, Ambassador Herbert von Dirksen, Secretary of State Ernst von Weizsäcker, the Kordt brothers, and Hitler's interpreter, Paul Schmidt. And to emphasize his points, he has added his own interpretations of a few crucial moments in recent European history.

There is some truth in Sir Lewis's warnings. German writers have often tended to take an approach little calculated to win them sympathy abroad. Most of them, if never Nazis, were nationalists to whom democratic methods were as uncongenial as they were to the Nazis, and their own ambitions for Germany differed but slightly from Hitler's. Many of them delighted at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact in collaborating with that Soviet Russia which they now profess to hate, and few of them showed much remorse for the crasser instances of Nazi savagery while the Third Reich was still triumphant. Their recent belated efforts to invent excuses for themselves are therefore, of necessity, rather clumsy. Unfortunately, however, Sir Lewis weakens his own thesis by his bitter anti-German prejudice, a failing from which a historian of his standing ought to be immune.

IT IS rather doubtful whether it can be asserted categorically, as Sir Lewis does, that the year 1938 offered a last chance to stop Hitler. At that time, Russia was in the midst of far-reaching purges which seriously weakened her army, at least temporarily; Great Britain and France were even less prepared than in 1939, and isolationism was reaching its high-water mark in the United States. Nor is it at all certain that the disjointed memoirs of the survivors of Hitler's regime really constitute a *deliberate* plot to build up a new myth in Germany. Are they not rather so many attempts at personal apologias and do they not fall into a pattern by accident rather than design? As a matter of fact, the comparative frankness with which many German writers have acknowledged at least the diplomatic crimes of the Nazi regime is more noteworthy than their feeble efforts to explain away their own guilt.

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Erwin Wickert's *Dramatische Tage in Hitlers Reich* is a case in point. Dr. Wickert worked for the German Foreign Office during the war, but the over-all effect of his book is not so much an apologia for that organ of government as a renewed condemnation of Hitler's and Ribbentrop's criminal methods, given in a series of four disconnected essays that deal with the Nazis' assumption of power, the occupation of Austria, the end of Czechoslovakia, and the Polish crisis. Relying exclusively on published sources, Dr. Wickert adds little that is new, but while Hitler's utter depravity may constitute a truism for us, it may still be news to parts of the German public. Especially to be remarked upon is that he shows President von Hindenburg, usually pictured as the embodiment of the "good" qualities of the German army, as the weakling he really was.

On the other hand, Dr. Wickert does contribute to some of the myth-making Sir Lewis deplores. He makes much of assiduously cultivated German stories about the "underground" of German generals that was allegedly ready to strike just before Chamberlain capitulated to Hitler's blackmail at Munich. As Sir Lewis correctly points out, the generals were undecided and the success of their plot was so problematical that no responsible statesman could have taken their emissary seriously, or based his own country's policy on their plans.

Dr. Wickert also deplores President Benes's supposed stubbornness during the Sudeten crisis, although his own account of Hitler's ever increasing demands flatly contradicts this assertion. The same criticism holds true for his otherwise excellent chapter on the events immediately preceding the attack on Poland. Here again, his own dramatic chronicle of Hitler's perversity and aggressive folly would demolish his charge that Poland's actions in the crucial months just before the war were ill-considered and that the British should have been more careful with their guarantees to Colonel Beck.

In spite of these misconceptions and a few minor errors in spelling and dates, Dr. Wickert's book ought to do more good than harm in Germany, and Sir Lewis Namier's fears may not be realized after all.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

No brief note could summarize Norman Thomas's distinguished career as a leader of American liberal thought and action. We shall mention only that his recent published writing includes *A Socialist's Faith* (1951) and the pamphlet *Democratic Socialism—A New Appraisal.*

The latest of Theodor H. Gaster's many contributions to Commentary was "Yizkor: The Living and the Dead" (March 1953).

Martin Greenberg joined the staff of Commentary several months ago as one of our associate editors.

Gertrude Himmelfarb is the author of *Lord Acton: A Study in Conscience and Politics.*

Oscar Handlin's *The Uprooted,* a study of the American immigrant, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in history for 1952.

H. L. Trefousse, an instructor in history at Brooklyn College, is the author of *Germany and American Neutrality, 1939-41.*

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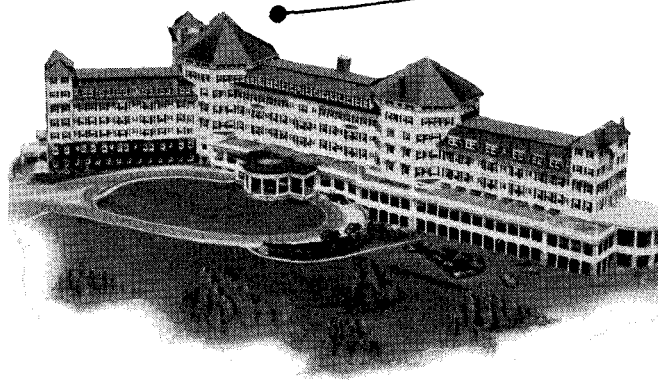

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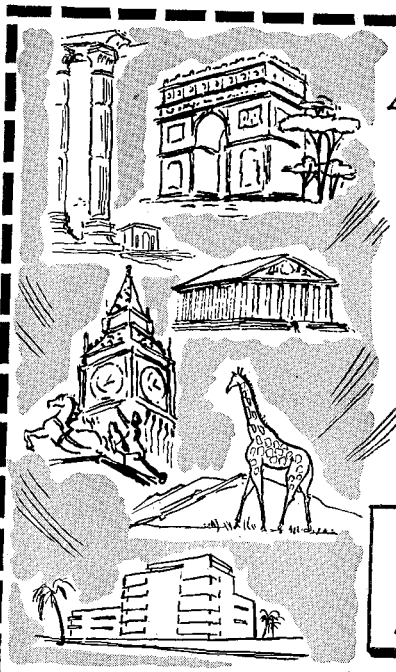

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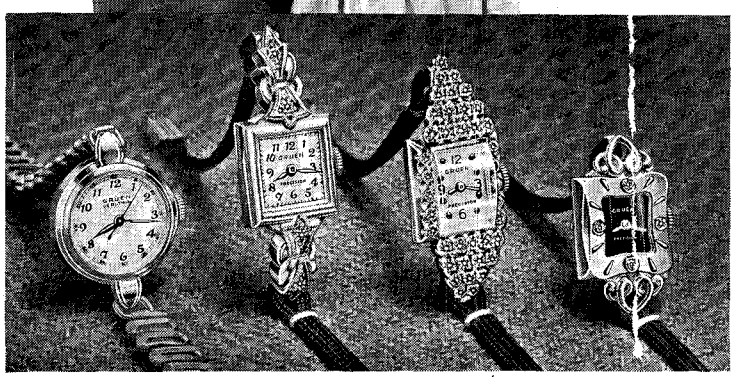

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